

FOOD
FOR
LAMBS



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FOOD FOR THE LAMBS;

OR, THE

LITTLE ONES INVITED TO JESUS.

By ROBERT BOYD, D. D.

Author of "THE WORLD'S HOPE," "GRACE AND TRUTH," "YOUNG
CONVERTS," etc., etc.

"Feed My Lambs."

J. W. GOODSPEED,
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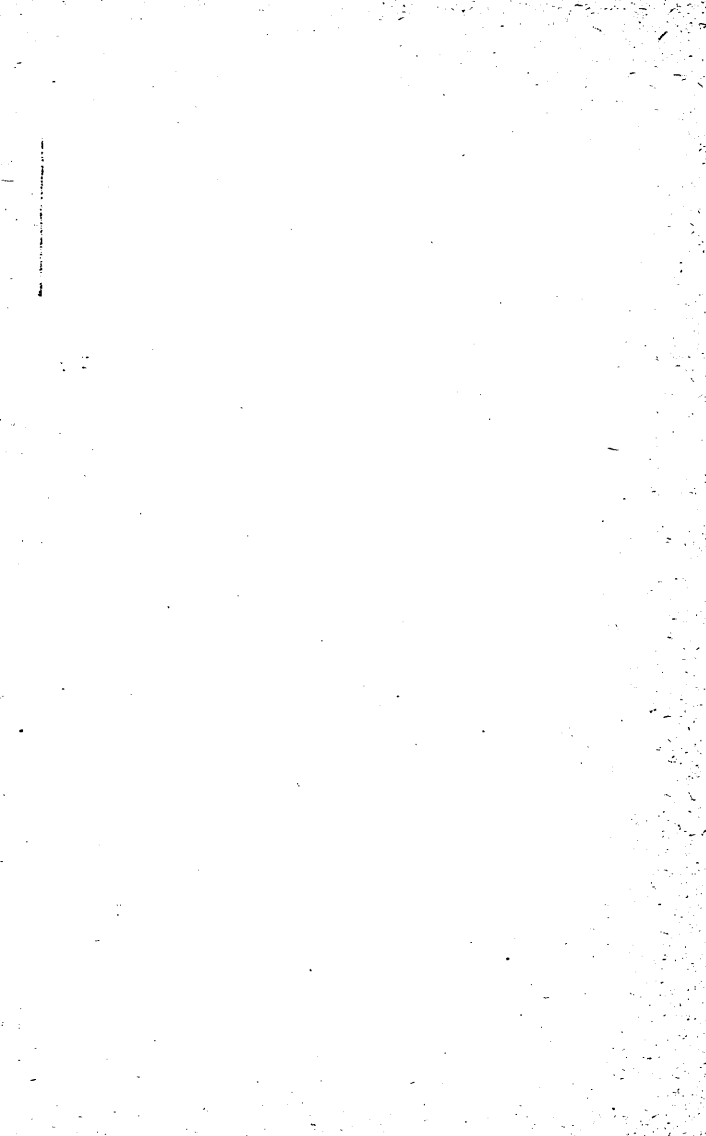


History

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I.

CHILDREN INVITED TO HEARKEN.

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you of the Lord." Ps. xxxiv: 11.

EAR Children,—You know that if you want to learn anything, you must begin at the beginning. Here is a little boy going to school for the first time. His little eyes are bright, and his little round face is smiles all over it, he is so proud and happy that he is going to school. It is a great day in his little history. But suppose that, instead of beginning at the alphabet, as the teacher wishes him to do, he were to insist upon going into the Latin class, and to say over and over again that if the teacher would not let him begin there, he

would not go to school at all,—you would all say he was a very foolish little boy, I am sure.

Now, God tells us in this passage that if we would be religious people we must begin at the very first lesson, that is “the fear of the Lord.” Fear of God does not mean a guilty dread of him, like what a slave has of a cruel master, or like what a wicked boy has of a policeman; but it means a dread of doing what would make such a good God angry with us, and a willingness to mind what he says. You can easily see, then, that this must be the first lesson in religion; for God can do us no good by anything he says to us, unless we will *mind* what he says to us and obey him.

This fear of God will also teach us to trust Him in all times of trouble and danger.

Two little boys were once playing in the fields when a great thunder storm came on. They were a long way from home, and the big black clouds came nearer and nearer, so as to seem very near to them; and the lightning began to flash out of them, and the loud thunder to bellow, till their lit-

the hearts trembled with fear. When the rain came down in torrents they went under a large tree for shelter.

"I'm awfully afraid," said Willie.

"So am I," said Alexander. "Oh! what shall we do?"

"I wish we were at home," said the other.

Just then a fearful peal of thunder broke over their heads, and seemed to shake the very ground under their feet.

"Willie," said Alexander, "let us pray to God to take care of us."

"No," said the other, "I'll take to my heels!"—and he ran homeward with all his might, leaving his little brother alone.

The one feared God and trusted in him—the other trusted in himself; yet how easily the Lord could have sent his lightnings to strike him dead. The one who prayed became a useful minister of Christ, and the author of many good books; the other grew up a wicked man, and died a poor drunkard.

We should all feel every day our dependence upon God, and be thankful that we have such a good Being to take care of us. There are some boys who think it looks manly to speak as if they would do what they liked, and not be guided by what God says, or what their parents say. Poor, silly boys! if they had their own way they would ruin themselves in a week. I saw a boy flying his kite the other day. He was holding the string fast, and looking up proudly at the great height to which his kite had gone.

Suppose that kite could speak, and were to say, "I wish that little fellow would let that string go, and let me alone: oh, how I would fly above the clouds and up to the skies!" Now, boys, you know that if the string were let go, the kite would at once fall down in the mud. So if God and your parents were to let you alone—let you take your own way, you would at once go to ruin! Your own heart would bring you to destruction.

The text invites you to come and hearken to instruction. God has given you two ears, and only

one tongue, so that you should hear a great deal more than you speak. If you make a good use of your ears, and learn a great deal of wisdom, then you will soon be able to make a good use of your tongue, and speak something that will do good to others. Some boys begin to use their tongues before they have got anything useful either in their heads or their hearts, and hence their words only annoy others and bring shame on themselves.

When the great preacher, Mr. Whitefield, was in this country, a wicked man went to where he was preaching, to see the great crowd, but made up his mind that he would not listen to one word that the preacher said. When the minister began to preach, therefore, he put a finger into each ear, to prevent the sound from reaching him; but a big fly lighted upon his nose and annoyed him so that he had to take one of his hands to drive it away, and just then the preacher thundered out, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He listened to the rest of the sermon and finally became a good man. Now I

want you to hearken to some things I wish to teach you.

First, I want to teach you some things about your souls. I feel solemn when I look at you; for in that little body of yours you have a soul that must live forever. It will be happy or miserable as long as God lives—that is, through all eternity.

I have read of some little children making very wise remarks. Two little children standing at the window, looking at some flies, the younger said to the other—

“How does God make flies?”

“God does not make them as men make things,” was the reply: “He says, ‘Let there be flies,’ and there are flies.”

A gentleman once said to a little girl, “I will give you an orange if you will tell me where God is.”

“I will give you two if you will tell me where God is not!” was the reply.

A little boy was once asked, “What is eternity?”

“The lifetime of the Almighty,” he replied.

Many ways have been tried to make us under-

stand something about how long the soul will live. It has been said: Suppose a little bird were to come and break a little piece off the house in which you live, and then in a thousand years were to come back for another little piece, how long before it would in this way remove the whole house? How long before it would remove a mountain—a city—or even the whole world? Yet that time would come, but your soul would still be living—happy in heaven, or miserable in hell! It can never stop living!

Your body is only the house that your soul lives in just now; and when it dies, and is buried in the grave, the soul will still live on. Just as when people move out of a house that they have lived in a long time; the house may be torn down, but they are still living somewhere else, thinking and speaking, smiling and weeping, happy or sad, just as before. All the people that once lived on our world, and whose graves are with us, are still living in eternity. It is the soul that thinks, and it will never stop thinking.

If you were removed a hundred miles from your home, you could still think of it, and of all the dear friends there. If you were taken away a thousand miles, or a million of miles, from that home, you could still speak and think about it; and so, when your soul shall be taken away into eternity, it will still be living and thinking, and if you are not a Christian when you die, you will be miserable forever.

This leads me to say that your precious soul needs a Saviour, or it can never be fit for heaven. The reason why you need a Saviour is that you are a sinner. God hates sin—he is angry with it every day. Suppose that you had got on a new suit of clothes, and that in your pocket you had many fine things that you wished to show to your friends. You put your hand into your pocket for that purpose, when you pull it back with a cry of horror, for there you find, curled up, a loathsome snake! Oh, what a shudder of loathing would come over you!

This is the way we feel when the Holy Spirit

opens our eyes to see the great evil of our hearts. Before that we may have thought that our hearts had many good things in them; but that was because we did not see ourselves as God sees us. When he lets us see our sins in all their vileness, we abhor ourselves. Then we feel our need of a Saviour, and that we must perish unless we can find one. Jesus is just the one we need. He died for sinners—for young sinners and old sinners. My young reader, he died for your sins, and is willing—nay, waiting to have you come to him now, that he may blot out all your sins, and make you his dear child.

I was reading lately about a dear little girl who came to this Saviour and was fitted for heaven by trusting in him. She was very sick, and her parents did not expect her to live long. Her dear pastor went to see her, and the following conversation took place:

“Mary, are you not afraid to die?”

She looked up with a happy smile upon her face, and said, “No, sir; I am not the least afraid.”

"But Mary," said the pastor, "you will have to meet God—that God against whom you have sinned very often; and surely you must be afraid when you think of meeting him."

Her reply was: "I would not be afraid to meet my mother, if I knew she was well pleased; and I know I am going to meet a *well-pleased God*."

"But," said the pastor, "what is God well pleased with, Mary? Is he well pleased with you?"

"No," she replied, "but he is well pleased with Jesus, and with what he did when he died for me."

Thus this little one died happy in Jesus. A little before she died her mother asked her if she would like to get better.

Her reply was, "I would rather go to Jesus."

My young reader, Jesus died for you as well as for this little girl. Will you not love him and trust him like her?

Those who come to Jesus by faith in him begin to love Jesus, and when they love him, that leads them to hate sin. This is the only true way that sin can be stopped. Suppose a boy loved to steal

or tell falsehoods, he might be punished so that he would be *afraid* to commit these sins, but the *love* of sin would be as strong in his heart as ever; or he might be shut up, so that he would have no chance to do these wicked things, but that would not hinder him from *wishing* to do them. Though he could not sin with his hands or his tongue, he would still be sinning in his heart, and it is the heart that God looks at. The moment that any one comes by faith to Jesus, however, he begins to love Jesus and to hate sin; he gets a new heart, and that gives a new life.

I want you to think, then, of the great love of God in giving his dear Son to die for you. This will lead you to love him; for the Apostle John says, "We love Him because he first loved us."

A woman in the Highlands of Scotland was out in the fields one day, helping her husband in the harvest time. She laid her little baby down upon the grass, to play, when a large eagle from a mountain near by pounced swiftly down upon the little one, and before the mother could reach the spot,

bore it away to its nest among the rocks of the mountain. The poor woman was in dreadful distress, and implored the men, a number of whom had now assembled, to save her child. They were hardy, bold men, well accustomed to climb these rugged cliffs; but they all shook their heads, and said that no human foot could ever reach the spot where the child had been carried.

At length the poor mother, in the desperation of her heart, broke away from them all, and began to climb the wild rocks. On she went from point to point—now hanging in awful peril, and then gaining a more secure place. Sometimes it seemed as if she was gone, and the people would utter a cry of anguish, and then they would see her bravely struggling on. At last she reached her babe, clasped it to her heart with a cry of joy, for it was unhurt, and brought it down in safety.

This was a mother's love. Oh, children, you can never know the depth of love in your mother's heart! Love her—obey her—do all that you can to make her happy; for if you lose her, you will

never get such a friend on earth as she is. But great as the love of a mother is, it is as nothing to the love of Jesus. The Bible tells us that a mother *may* forget, but Jesus *never*! This mother risked her life to save her babe, but Jesus laid down his life to save you. He died in dreadful agony upon the cross, that you poor, sinful soul might be saved. Ought you not to love him with all your heart for all he has done for you?

Do you ask what is faith, of which I have spoken so often? It is believing God's word and trusting him.

A mother took her little girl to a large town, where she was a stranger. Clouds gathered in the skies, and the rain began to pour down. The mother then said to her child:

"Lucy, dear, I dare not take you farther; I must go, for I have business to do elsewhere. I must leave you in this shop. Don't you go away from it, and I will be back as soon as I can, but my errand will take me some time."

The child looked into her mother's eyes and said: "You won't forget me, I know."

Her mother left her in the care of the master of the shop. At first she was very much amused at seeing the people passing out and in ; but as hour after hour went past, and her mother did not come, she began to get a little sad and weary. She got acquainted with a little girl about her own age, who said to her :

“ Perhaps your mamma will forget you.”

“ I am sure she will not do that,” said Lucy.

“ How can you be sure? She *may*, you know,” said the other.

“ She promised,” said Lucy, “ and she never broke her promise yet.”

Another hour passed. It was getting dark ; the gas lamps were lighted, — and still her mother did not come. A lady from the same place where she lived, and whom she knew, offered to take her home, but she said, “ No, thank you ; mamma will come for me.” Now that was faith or trust in her mother’s word. Just so we must believe what God says.

II.

REMEMBERING GOD.

"Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth."
Eccl. xii. 1.

EAR Children,—God has given you the power to think. Your thoughts can move very quick. One moment you can be thinking of something at home, in another second you can send your thoughts away across the ocean to the other side of the globe. Now you can think of what is going on right here: in the twinkling of an eye you can be thinking of God, and angels, and good people in heaven. Lightning moves very fast, but not so fast as our thoughts.

The power to think is a great gift from God, but it will be of no use to us unless we use it. If you

were to tie up your right arm in a sling, and never use it, you might as well have none. Some boys and girls do not like to think, and many of the troubles they get into arise from their *thoughtlessness*. On a summer evening, after the gas or the candles are lighted up, you have seen some flies buzzing around the lights, coming nearer and nearer to the danger every time they came around. You can almost imagine you hear them say, "What fine fun we are having!" till one of them goes too near the danger, and getting burned, falls down, dying in great agony.

We do not blame the fly, for God did not give it the power to think; but when we see children buzzing around circuses, and theatres, and saloons, and other dangerous and wicked places—when we see them going into bad company and sinful ways, we think of the fate of the poor fly. They may think it fun, but they will not do so very long, for sin will bring people into misery sooner or later.

God in this text tells us to think of him—to remember him. What we remember has a great

effect on us. If we remember something bad, it will corrupt our minds—if something good, it will do us good.

A missionary on his way to church saw a sailor standing at the door of a drinking saloon. He went up to the man and asked him to go to church with him. He refused to go in a very rude way.

"My friend," said the missionary, kindly, "if your mother was here, what would she advise you to do?"

The tears started to the sailor's eyes, and as he brushed them away with his rough hand he exclaimed, "I 'll go with you, sir—I 'll go!" He remembered his mother's prayers and advices, and it did him good. Perhaps that mother was in the grave, but she was still speaking to him as when she was alive.

A wounded soldier boy, when told by the doctor that he could not live, cut off a lock of his hair, and said, "Send that to my mother. Tell her I remembered what she taught me about Jesus, and that I die happy."

The Bible says "As a man *thinketh* in his heart,

so is he. If you try only to remember bad things, you will be bad. If you try to think of what is good, you will become like what you think about. Let me mention some things about God that you should remember always.

I. Remember that God constantly sees you. We are very apt to think about God as if he were like ourselves. There is a little animal that runs when it sees anybody coming, and hides its head in a bush, or anything of that kind, and because it does not see the danger, it comes to the conclusion that there is no danger. Now, some little children are just like that: because they cannot see God, they think that God cannot see them. Perhaps you have heard of the man who went into the field of his neighbor to steal corn, and took his little boy with him, to fill the bag that he brought to carry the corn in. Before he began to steal he looked around in different directions, to see if any one was looking.

His little boy said, "There is one way you did n't look, pa."

"What way?" said the man, in alarm.

"You didn't look up!—God is looking!" was the reply.

The man went home without taking anything that did not belong to him. He remembered God.

When I was coming across the great ocean one of the sailors had such strong eyes that he could see ships coming, and could see the land, a long time before any of the passengers could see anything. We used to wonder very much at this; but if that man could have looked clear across the great sea, and could have told us what was going on in our homes, how astonished we would have been! But God can see all that is going on in every place. Through all the cities, and towns, and villages, and houses of this world, away up among the stars, and away down in dark dungeons and pits, where it is perfectly dark, His eyes see everything.

Yes, my little reader, God sees what you are *thinking*, as well as what you are doing. Sometimes you let bad thoughts come into your mind,

and you keep them there, instead of driving them away. You would be ashamed if your mother or any of your friends should look into your heart and see what you are thinking. If some of these thoughts were written on your brow, so that others could read them, you would be afraid to go out on the street; or if you did, you would pull your hat well down, to hide your thoughts from being seen.

Now, God sees all that you think and feel. In the darkest room he sees you, for the Bible says, "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." He is about your bed and about your path, and spies out all your ways, the same good book tells us. I want you to remember all this, so as to avoid all sinful thoughts and ways; for whenever you have a dread of God seeing you, it is because you have been doing wrong. Suppose there was one place in the world where God could not see people, and that you were to see great crowds going away to that place to live, you would know that they were going to do something wicked—something that they did not wish God to see.

All good people are glad that God sees them, because they know that he can always take care of them.

II. Remember that God hears all that you say. See those boys loafing around the corners of the streets, late at night, when they should be at home. Hark! they are saying words they dare not say if they knew their mothers were listening! See that little fellow, who has just spoken his first bad word. If he were to look round the corner and see that his mother or Sabbath-school teacher was there, and know that what he said had been heard, oh, how he would blush with shame! But God hears every word he says, and is putting it down in his book of remembrance.

I know a gentleman who was engaged to deliver a speech in a public hall one evening. He had traveled all the night before to get there, and when he arose to speak felt tired and sleepy, and did not care whether he made a good speech or not. He intended to make a few common-place remarks, and go home. But after he had been speaking a

little while he heard something scratching behind him, and looking round saw the reporters for the papers taking down his speech, and knew that every word he said would be published abroad in the morning. This roused him and made him do his very best.

My dear children, God is reporting our words, and on the great day of Judgment he will publish them to the world. Jesus said that for every idle word we shall render an account in the day of Judgment. You say a great many words that you forget a few moments after you say them,—but God *never forgets*. Take care what you say.

III. Remember that God loves you. Suppose you were asked who loves you best, what would you answer? Some of you might say, "My mother and my father," or perhaps some dear little one whose parents are dead might say, "My sister or my brother." But no; if any of these friends love you, it is because God has put that love into their hearts. God loves you better than all in the world beside—no matter how many loving friends you

may have. How do you know that your mother loves you? By what she does for you? When you are sick she sits up night after night with you, and when you are in pain she weeps over you, and you can see that she would gladly suffer every pain for you if it were possible. She has passed many a sleepless night over you when you were a baby, and has every day done a great deal for you since.

Now, we know that God loves us in the same way — by what he has done for us. You know that the President of the United States lost one of his dear little boys by death a short time ago. Now if he were go to some of the poorest parts of the city where he lives, and adopt a poor, little, ragged, starved, neglected boy, and take him to his home, and clothe him, and feed him, and educate him, and say to him, "You will be my son in the place of the little boy I lost, and you must call me father," would this not be great love, and ought not this boy to love such a dear friend?

But that would be nothing to God's love for you. He gave his dear Son to come into this wicked

world to suffer and die for you. Jesus came and was born in a stable, and though he was rich in heaven, yet for your sake he became poor — became a poor boy for you. He had no money, no home, but went about on foot from place to place for you. He often shed tears and was sorrowful on account of the sins of the world, so that he was called "the man of sorrows." But it was not only tears that he shed for you, but his precious blood. Blood flowed from his back, from his hands and his feet — from his head, when they crowned him with thorns — from his side, which was pierced by a spear.

See your dear Saviour going along the street, carrying the cross, till he falls down fainting under it — till his holy head lies upon the cold, hard stones of the street! Oh, must not that heart be colder and harder than these stones that does not melt at the sight! At last he comes to Calvary, and the wicked men lay hold of him, and cast him rudely upon the ground. They nail his hands and feet to the great beam of wood, while his whole

body quivers with pain. Then they raise the cross up, and plant it in a hōle that had been dug for it, and leave the holy Jesus there, in the midst of a shouting, mocking crowd, to die that lingering death of agony! Children, all that pain and shame he suffered for your sins. Oh, how wicked it is not to love him!

We are told about a gentleman in Poland, who in the winter time was driving in a sleigh through the woods, and was attacked by the wolves. He had a servant with him who loved him very much, and as the furious beasts pressed upon them, that servant, to save his master, cast himself among them, and was torn to pieces. This he did to give his master a chance to escape. He laid down his life for him. How could that gentleman help loving the memory of that man who died to save him!

And you could not help loving Jesus if you would only think of him, remember him, and all that he has done. After he was taken down from the cross, cold and dead, they laid him in the

grave. That heart, that beat so warm with love for you, lay cold in the grave.

I was once at the funeral of a little boy, and when the time came to shut down the coffin-lid, after the mother and friends had kissed the cold brow of the dead, his little sister came rushing forward, and in a wild despairing voice cried, "Oh, don't shut him up—don't shut him up!" Poor child! she could not endure the thought that her dear little golden-haired brother, with whom she had played so often, should be shut up in the dark grave. But Jesus lay in the grave for us, and was shut up in that dark grave made out of a rock, that our souls might never be cast into the darkness or hell.

Then remember what that dear Redeemer is doing for you now. He rose from the grave and went back to his home in heaven, to plead with his Father for you. He never forgets you for a single moment, though he is often forgotten by you.

A little boy had done something naughty, so that he was afraid to go home and meet his father, lest

he should be punished. When night came he was seen by his mother hiding about the barn and the out-houses, and she went to him, and in a kind loving voice spoke to him about his sins, and prayed for him with her soft, gentle hand upon his head, till the tears flowed down his cheeks. She then took him by the hand and led him to his father, and said, "Papa, John is very sorry for his bad conduct: forgive him for my sake." And his father kissed him and forgave him.

Now that mother was an intercessor for that boy, and Jesus is an intercessor for us in heaven. He pleads for us in glory. About a year afterward that boy got into trouble again; but by that time his good, loving mother was dead, and he had no earthly friend to plead for him. But Jesus never dies. The Bible tells us that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Will you not remember this dear Friend?

The text tells us when you are to remember your Creator: "in the days of your youth." It is easier to be a follower of Jesus when you are young, be-

fore your heart grows hard and bad habits become fixed. Besides, you may not live to be old, and therefore you ought to come to Jesus *now*.

A lady once took her little girl with her to see the great city of London. They came to a row of beautiful stores, and the little girl began to tease her mother to buy her something. Her mother told her that if she would buy her something out of all the stores, as they went along, she would give her money. The little girl was delighted, and agreed at once to do so.

The first store they came to she bought something, and in great glee passed on to the next. But at the door she started back and turned pale. What was the cause? Ah! in that store they sold coffins—large coffins and little ones, all piled up ever so high! The girl had to give up her agreement with her mother; for had she bought a little coffin, that would be saying that she expected to die young, and if she bought a large one, she did not know that she would live to grow up to be a woman.

More than half the people in this world die when they are young. Go into the cemetery and you will see how many little graves there are. Come to Jesus, then, while you are young, and then you will be prepared to live or die, as God pleases.



III.

GOD THE LOVING FATHER.

“Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?” Jer. iii: 4.



MY Dear Little Readers,—This is God's voice speaking to you. You know that the Bible is a book that God has written, so that when we can read it we have God speaking to us. If your mother was to go away from home, she might be a hundred miles from you, and yet she could speak to you by sending you a letter, and in that letter she could tell all that she wanted you to do, and tell how much she loved you. The Bible is God's letter to us, sent from heaven. I hope you will love it, and read it very carefully,

A little girl once said to her mother : "Why do you read the Bible so much, mamma? Have you not read it all through?"

"Yes, a great many times, my dear," said her mother.

"Well, then, you must know all there is in it by this time, and yet you read it every day."

"Do you remember, Mary," inquired her mother, "last summer, when you were away at school?"

"Yes, mamma."

"You told me that when you got a letter from home you used to read it over and over, till it was almost worn out."

"And so I did, mamma."

"Well, what made you read the letter so often? You knew all there was in it."

"Why, because it seemed a pleasure, and made me think about home, and you, and papa."

"Well, my dear, I read over some parts of the Bible that I have read hundreds of times before, for the same reason—that it reminds me of my home in heaven, of my heavenly Father and my

Saviour, and of what he wishes me to do, and therefore I love to read."

"Is heaven my home, too, mamma?" said little Mary. "Shall you take me with me when you go?"

"I cannot tell you, my dear: I cannot give you leave to go to heaven, but I know who can."

"Ah! you mean Jesus Christ, mamma — do n't you?"

"Yes, my dear; you must ask him, and you must read and learn to understand this book, which is like a letter from him to us, to tell us all about himself and about heaven."

I have told you this little story to impress upon your minds this one thought, that when you read or hear the Bible read, it is God that you hear speaking. And oh! how lovingly he speaks to you in this passage! He bids you come and call him Father, and to take him as the guide of your life. We are naturally afraid of God, because we are sinners, and we feel that we have deserved his wrath. We dread to think of him, and seek to flee from him.

I knew a little boy who one beautiful summer evening was lying upon the grass in his father's yard, looking up at the stars, which one after another were beginning to appear. At last he began to think of God, and how he had sinned against him, and a great dread came over him. He felt as if God was just going to stretch out his hand and seize him, and shut him up in the world of woe. He ran into the house, hid his little face in his mother's lap, and asked her to pray for him. Now, God does not wish us to feel this guilty dread of him. He wants us to love him and trust in him, and to come to him with all our wants, like a loving child coming to his father.

To take away these fears, and to lead us to trust in him, God has shown his great love to us in giving his Son to be our Saviour by dying for us.

There was once a free family lived in a place where slaves were kept, and bought and sold. They were very poor, and the father of the family being taken sick, they were nearly brought to starvation. At last they began to think of selling one of the

children to be a slave, to save the rest from death. But when the time came the parents could not fix upon the one they could part with. They looked at the children one after another, their hearts bleeding with anguish; but they found that they could not make up their minds to part with any of them. Now, God had but one Son — an only beloved Son — and he gave him up to die for you!

A friend of mine had a boy that grieved him very much by his naughty ways. He had whipped him often; but, as a man said about a bad boy of that kind, "he would n't stay whipped!" It did not seem to make him any better. One day he did something very wrong, when his father took him into his room, prayed with him, then sat down and reasoned with him about the wickedness of his conduct. He got the boy to confess that his conduct was very bad, and that he deserved to be punished. He then took down the rod. The boy trembled, expecting that now he would get a most severe flogging. But the father put the rod into his son's hands, and

said, "You say that you deserve to be punished, but I love you, and will bear the punishment for you. Now strike me!" The boy stood astonished, first looking into his father's face, to see if he was in earnest, and then burst into tears, and begged his father to whip him at once, promising that he would behave better for the time to come,—and he kept his word.

Jesus bore the punishment for us, guilty sinners. He was wounded for our sins, and we are healed by the stripes that he suffered for us. This he did that you might be able to come to God as your Father, have all your sins blotted out, and have a good home with that Father in heaven forever. Those who come to God for the sake of what Jesus has done for them are not afraid to die, for they know that they are going home to their Father's house above. They are not afraid in times of danger, for they know that the Great God can take care of them. They know that he has all power.

I was reading lately about a little girl who was

very much afraid of thunder and her teacher told her a story. He said :

“ There was once a mighty king, who was so terrible in war that all his enemies were afraid of him : the very sound of his name made them tremble.”

“ He did n't make the thunder — did he ?” asked the little girl.

“ No, — but let me go on. His arm was so strong that the horse and his rider would sink beneath his battle-axe, and when he struck with his sharp sword his enemies fell dead at his feet. This mighty king had a little fair-haired daughter, who watched him as he prepared for battle. She saw him put on his helmet, and laughed as the plumes nodded above his brow. She saw the stately battle-axe brought out ; she saw him take his keen sword in his hand, — he tried its edge, and then waved it above his head. She laughed as it sparkled in the sunlight, and even while it was upheld ran towards her father to take a parting kiss. Why was not that little child afraid of that mighty king with the fierce weapons ?”

"I do n't know," said the child.

"Because he was her father. She knew that he loved her — loved her as his own life. She knew that those dangerous weapons would never be raised against her, unless to save her from worse peril."

"Now," continued the teacher, "God is like that mighty king : sickness, lightning, danger and death are all his weapons, but we need not fear them if we are truly his children. When the sharp lightning flashes in the sky we can look calmly at its beauty, for it is in our Father's hand. Sickness may be around us, but our Father can keep us safe. Death may come, but it will only be to send us to our Father's arms."

I want you, then, my dear children, to come to God and love him as your Father. No father upon earth ever loved his child as your heavenly Father loves you.

A little girl once applied to a church to be taken in as a member.

"My child, how old are you?" said the pastor.

"Thirteen," she answered.

"Do you think you are old enough to be bound to love the Saviour?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir; I think I am," she replied.

"Why do you love him, then?" the pastor asked.

She seemed surprised at the question, but turned upon him a face bathed in tears, yet beaming with joy and peace, and answered, "Why, I love him because he loved me and gave himself for me."

I come now to speak about what the text says about our heavenly Father being a guide to us. "Thou art the guide of my youth." You know that when persons are traveling in dangerous and unknown places, they have always to take a guide with them, who knows the way and can warn them when they come to dangerous places. When children will not be guided by what God says in his Holy Word, and start off in this sinful, dangerous world, to follow their own way, they are sure to get into trouble.

A visitor once went to a jail, to speak to the prisoners about their souls. The prison was a

gloomy-looking building, with little windows and great iron bars put across them. Inside were little dark cells and great iron doors, with strong bolts and locks. In one of these little cells was a young man, who seemed to be dying. He told the visitor that he had been sentenced to go to the State prison for life ; but said he, in a despairing voice, "I shall never be able to go to the prison, I am so sick. Oh, if I was only ready to die it would not matter so much !"

"And are you not ready to die ?" said the visitor.

"Oh, no," said he ; "I am afraid to die."

"But why are you afraid to die ?"

"Because I am such a sinner."

"There is hope, and mercy, and salvation for sinners, for the greatest of sinners, through Jesus Christ."

"I have no hope," he said, sadly. "You may talk to me about Christ and salvation ; but there is none for me, and that makes me afraid to die."

The visitor says : "I talked to him about his father ; and when I spoke of his mother, then his

lips trembled, and a single tear stole down his burning cheek."

"Was your mother a Christian?"

"Oh yes, sir, — a good woman she was. Many and many a time she has warned me of this."

"Then you have had a good religious instruction, kind Christian parents, who often prayed for you, no doubt, and taught you to pray?"

"Oh yes, sir," he said.

"Then," said the visitor, "why are you here?"

Said the dying man, "I can answer you in one word: I DID NOT OBEY MY PARENTS."

Here was a youth that would not be guided by his parents, nor by the Bible, nor by the God of the Bible. He sought to be his own guide, and you see how quickly he came to ruin. The good book says: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." We need a guide to take us by the hand and lead us through all the dangers of our way, and none but the heavenly Father is able to do this. You may have a good, kind, earthly father, who is willing to do all he can for you, and to help you by his ad-

vice; but he cannot always be with you, and he may have to die and leave you some of these days. But when father and mother forsake you the Lord will take you up. He will be with you in every trouble, and will never leave you nor forsake you.

A missionary was going through one of the back streets of Glasgow one day, when a little pale, ragged boy came up to him, and with tears in his eyes said, "Will you please, sir, come and see my mother, — she is very sick." The servant of God followed the boy down a dark, filthy alley, and then up a great many stairs, until he came to the room where the poor woman was lying upon her death-bed. It was a small room, very poorly furnished, and looked very gloomy. The missionary, however, found that this poor dying woman was a child of God, and that she was very happy in the thought that she was so near to her heavenly home. Her only anxiety was that she must leave her dear little boy alone in the world, for his father had been dead a long time.

She called her son to her bedside, and fixing her

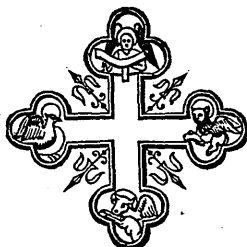
eyes upon him, said : " Dear Willie, your mother is going to leave you. I am going to Jesus, in heaven. I want you to meet me there. You will have many trials and temptations when your mother is taken away from you ; but if you take God for your guide, he will bring you safe to me in heaven at last."

She then put her hand under her pillow, and brought out her little Bible, that had been her comfort in many a day of trouble, and placing it in Willie's hand, said : " This is all I have to leave you, my son, but it is God's best gift, and I want you to promise me that you will read a portion of it every day." The dear boy wept as if his heart would break, but amidst many sobs and tears he gave the promise that she asked.

She then placed her thin, trembling hand upon his head, and prayed for him, and gave him her blessing. That night that little boy was an orphan, sitting in that lonely room, beside the dead body of his mother. But he took God for the guide of his youth, and kind friends were raised up for him ;

and now he has grown up to be a useful man, and is a missionary among the heathen in a distant part of the world.

Now, dear children, will you take God for your Father and your Guide? If not, Satan will be your father—the worst being in the whole universe,—and when you die you will dwell with him forever. Oh, what a dreadful thought!



IV.

GOD KNOCKING AT THE DOOR OF THE HEART.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock.” Rev. iii: 20.

BELOVED Children,— You know that a knock at the door is always something that causes a great stir in the house. Some winter evening the family are all sitting around the fire, mother sewing, father reading, the children looking at pictures or talking to each other, when — hark! — some one knocks at the door! There is a stir at once, — things are put into order, for a stranger may be coming in, and the children sit still and wonder who it can be; and when at last the person comes in, sometimes we are very much pleased and sometimes we are not, according to

the state of our minds or the character of the person who enters.

A little boy carelessly throwing stones on the street broke a window. He ran away home, and thought that no one knew who did it. He was engaged with his brothers and sisters in a very nice play when a knock was heard at the door. He was sent to open the door, when he saw the very man standing there whose window he had broken. His face flushed, and his own heart told him the cause of *that* knock at the door.

Sometimes these knocks at the door cause great disappointment. Here is a little girl who has a very kind father. He has promised, when he comes home from his business, to bring her some nice present. All day she has been wondering what it would be, and all the afternoon she has been looking every now and again at the clock, to see if it was not near time for her papa to come. At last it is near the time, and she cannot keep still one minute. There's a knock at the door, — "That's he!" she says, and runs to open it; but instead of

her papa with the fine present, it is only a stranger, wanting to know where some one lives that he is looking for.

But the knocking in this text is something very wonderful. You may know this from the word "behold." If you were to go to the door, and find that the President of the United States, or some great man, that had been knocking, and who wanted to come into your humble home, how very much astonished you would be! Now it is Jesus that here knocks — he who made the stars, and the sun, and all the great and beautiful things that you see around you. And he does not come with empty hands: he wants to come in, that he may give you many blessings and gifts, and that he may make you happy.

"Jesus Christ loves little children,

And he waits to do them good:

Should not children then love Jesus?

Yes indeed, they always should.

"He can keep them safe from danger—

Guide them all the time they live;

Then let children come to Jesus,
Who has so much good to give."

Sometimes your father knocks in the morning at your bedroom door, to wake you up ; and if you are very sleepy you try to forget that knock altogether, and go to sleep again. When people are careless about their souls, and make no preparation for eternity, they are described in the Bible as asleep: "Awake, thou that sleepest." God has to knock loudly in order to awaken the slumbering sinner and startle him out of his deep sleep. Let me tell you some of his different ways of doing this.

The great speaker on "Temperance," Mr. Gough, tells the following fact :

" ' Is this your little girl, woman ? ' said the lady.

" ' Yes. ' "

" ' Do you send her to the Sunday School ? ' "

" ' No ; she has no clothes to go to school with. ' "

" ' I'll find her clothes. ' "

" ' But her father would sell them for drink. ' "

" ' Well, send her to my house on Sunday morn-

ings, and I'll give her clothes to go to school in, and she can come home in her old clothes.'

"The girl went to school, was very attentive, and they gave her a New Testament, which she was soon able to read. Then she would ask people: 'Jesus says, "Suffer little children to come unto me."' Does he mean *all* little children?' And how glad she was to find he was no respecter of persons!

"She was soon laid upon her death-bed, and she hugged the Testament to her heart, and asked people to read it to her. The father came in and sat by the side of his child. I can never forget his look as he told me: 'I was mad. I wanted drink!—I must have it! There was fire in me, and I must have it! I had stripped the house of everything I could lay my hands on; and if they had not kept watch, I would have stolen the bed of my dying child!' He thought she slept. He just looked at her, put his hand under the pillow, took out the Testament, and got a pint of gin for it. 'The gin started the stagnant blood in my stomach,' he con-

tinued, 'and I felt better. I sat down by her side. As I sat there the stupifying influences of the drink made me feel pleasure, though but for a little.'

"She awoke, laid her hand on his, and said, 'Father, I am going to heaven, for Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and I have come to him as well as I knew how. But, father, when I get to heaven, if Jesus should ask me what you did with my little Testament, what shall I tell him?'

"It was like a flash of lightning through him. He had robbed her of the precious Word of God, and robbed her of it for a pint of gin! It all flashed before him. He looked at her as a swift accusing messenger; 'and,' he said, 'before she died that child held my two hands in her little ones, and heard me cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner!'"

Here then, dear children, you see that the way God knocked at this man's heart was through the dying words of his dear little girl. He became a devoted Christian, and went about, doing a great deal of good.

I knew a case almost like the above. A little girl who went to Sabbath School and learned to pray had a very wicked father. He was taken sick, and one day his little daughter, with one of her school companions, went into his bedroom. They supposed him to be asleep, and his little girl said to the other, "Father is asleep — is n't he? Let us kneel down and ask God to change his heart, for we know he is not fit to die." The father heard these words, and also the simple prayer they offered for him, and it led to his conversion. When he recovered from his sickness he joined the same church where his little girl attended school. Thus God knocked at this man's heart through the prayer of his own child.

In Scotland a minister of the gospel died very happy in Jesus. His widow and little children were left without any means of support, and when the poor mother thought of where she was to get bread for her children, she felt very sad. One day she was sitting in her own room, weeping very bitterly, when her little son, a boy of five years of age, came

softly to her side, and placing his little hand in hers, looked wistfully into her face and said, "Mother, mother, is God dead?" Ah! it was God knocking at her heart through the voice of that child, and reproving her for not trusting in him. She felt this, and said, "No, no, my son, God is not dead; he lives, and has promised to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow, and I will rely upon him!"

When a little babe was dying the mother was in the deepest distress; and as the little one grew worse, and seemed to be in great pain, she could not contain herself, and burst out into loud weeping. The little one opened its eyes slowly, and said in its little lisping way, "God will take care of baby." The mother felt that it was God knocking at her heart, and saying, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

God often knocks loudly through the holy words of the Bible being brought to mind. A soldier had a copy of the Scriptures in his pocket, the gift of his mother. The battle raged and the bullets fell

thick around him. He was struck by a ball in the breast, but the Bible that he had in his pocket saved him. After the battle he found that the ball had gone through the Bible till it stopped at these words: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment." Eccl. xi : 9. It was a loud knock at his heart. He felt how near to death and judgment he was. His carelessness all fled, and he became a Christian.

But you must remember that none of these things I have spoken of would do any good were it not for the Holy Spirit. Neither sermons, nor afflictions, nor warnings will soften our hard hearts unless the Spirit applies them to us with power. He comes and knocks at the heart again and again. You cannot see the spirit any more than you can see the wind; but he comes to your heart and gently reminds you of your sins, and of your Saviour, and of your dead mother's prayers and kind words. He

makes you feel serious, and makes you feel like going into some quiet place to pray. When you do not do what this good Spirit makes you feel like doing, then he is grieved and goes away, and if he were never to come back your soul would be lost forever. You would grow hard and careless, and get worse and worse, until at last you went down to hell!

The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible, and he alone can put its truths into your heart, so that you will love them.

A rich gentleman had read some bad books, so that he had become an infidel. One day he was out walking in his beautiful grounds, when he heard the voice of a child reading aloud. He followed the sound, and came to a cottage, where he found a little girl sitting at the door with a book in her hand. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Why do you weep? Are you not well, my dear?" asked he, in a kind tone.

"Oh yes," she replied, smiling through her tears: "but I weep because I am happy—so happy!"

“How can you weep if you are so happy?” said the gentleman, surprised.

“Because, sir, I have been reading about the Lord Jesus Christ, and I love him so much.”

“Why do you love him so much? He has been dead a long time;—he can do you no good.”

“Oh no, sir; he is not dead—he lives in heaven!”

“It is your mother or some such person who makes you believe this?”

“No, no,” said the child, earnestly; “it is true, and I am glad!”

These simple replies were carried to his heart by the Holy Spirit.

A short time after this the children in that neighborhood were to have a sermon preached to them, and he thought he would go. The minister took for his text: “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” It made him go home to pray and to read his Bible, and he became a good man. It was the Holy Spirit that led that child to love her Bible,

and that knocked at the heart of that gentleman through what she said.

One reason why sinners do not like to let Christ into their hearts is, that their hearts are full of many wicked desires that they know must be turned out if they let Him in. Now, suppose that your father had commanded you not to keep company with a certain bad boy, but that you disobeyed him, and brought that boy into your own room; and suppose that while he and you are shut up there your father were to come and knock, you would not know what to do. You would not like to let your father in unless you could first get the bad boy out. So it is with Jesus. You know that there are many things in your heart that Jesus hates. But you say, "If I could only get my heart into a good state, I would be glad to have Jesus come in." You never can get it into a good state. You must let Jesus in first, and he will turn all his and your enemies out.

There was once a little boy who wanted to get up early in the morning, to work in his garden and to learn his lessons, and his father gave him an alarm

clock to have in his chamber. In the morning, at the hour he wished to awake, it would set up such a whizzing and ringing that he would be wide awake in a minute. One day it awoke him as usual, but he did not pay any attention to it, but turned over and went to sleep again. Soon he got into the *habit* of doing this, until his clock was of no use to him—he might as well have had none at all. So Christ comes and knocks, and sinners will not mind him. The Bible speaks to them, but they sleep on in their sins. They get used to hearing God speak, until the habit is formed of not doing what he says, and the heart gets hard as a rock.

Jesus is now ready to come into your heart. When a person knocks at a door he is ready to come in at once; and if the person has to knock very often, and no one comes to open it, he is very apt to go away. Now, Jesus, has knocked very often at your heart, and you have not opened it yet. Take care that he does not leave you, never to return. Oh! do not delay one moment in opening your heart, and getting the love of Jesus to fill it:

then you will be happy and safe, for Jesus will be with you all your life long.

'Shepherd, in thy bosom folded
Let thy little lambs repose ;
Sweetly, fondly, safely tended —
Guarded well from all my foes.

" With thy look of love direct me,
Lest I wander from thy way ;
With thy mighty arm protect me,
Lest I fall an early prey."



V.

GOOD NEWS.

“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.” Luke ii: 10.

EAR Children, — You often hear your pastor, and also your Sabbath-school teacher, using the word “Gospel,” and when you read the Bible you often see the same word. Do you know what it means? It means good news — glad tidings — something that ought to make everybody that hears it happy. When a nation is at war, and news comes of a great victory, there is great joy in the land — ringing of bells and firing of cannon, flags flying and cities illuminated; but those who have lost dear friends are very sad, for they cannot help thinking of the dear ones lying in their blood on the dreadful battle-field. But the gospel is good

news that comes to us from heaven — shedding no blood, making no little orphans, no weeping widows, but fitted to make the whole world happy, if the people will only believe it.

A teacher once asked his class what was the best news they had ever heard. One said it was when his father, who had been away for years, sent word that he was coming home. Another said it was when his parents told him that they were going to buy him a pony to ride upon. A third said that it was when the doctor said that his little sick baby sister, who had been expected to die, was getting better. But one little boy said solemnly, "The best news is, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." This boy did not say this just as a parrot can say a thing over that it has been taught to say, but he said it because he felt it in his heart. He was a converted child — he loved the Lord Jesus.

The gospel is good news, because it tells us of a way by which our souls can be saved from going down to hell.

Some years ago a minister in London was walking along the crowded streets of that city when he saw a carriage and two fiery horses just about to pass over a little girl who was crossing the street. At the risk of his own life he snatched her from among the horses' feet, and ran with her to the sidewalk. When he looked into the pale, frightened face of the little one, he found that it was his own child! Her father saved her, and bore her away to his home so happy! Now, God sent his dear Son to die in our stead—to suffer on account of our sins—to save us from being lost forever, The very reason that his Son is called Jesus is because he saves his people from their sins; and when he has thus saved them he takes them away to his beautiful and glorious home in heaven, after their work is done on earth.

Children often sing about that happy land, and about wanting to be an angel; but you can never get there unless Jesus takes away your sins. Even your dear mother, if she was in heaven, and you were to come to the gate of that holy place with

your sins not taken away, would not want you to be admitted, for she would know that you would not be happy in heaven unless you had a new heart.

A poor girl in Edinburgh was taken very sick with a fever. She was a poor, neglected child, and had not been taught much about Jesus when she was in health; but a good Christian lady visited her, and told her the good news about a Saviour. She taught her to say that verse of the hymn you often sing:

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load."

When the lady visited her she fixed her eyes upon her, and said in an alarmed voice, "I am dying!"

"And what although you were to die?" said the lady.

"But I am an awful sinner!" was her reply.

"But you have a great Savior to go to," said the

lady. "Do you remember, Mary, the pretty hymn, 'I lay my sins on Jesus?'"

"Yes, the spotless Lamb of God," she said.

She then seemed to be thinking of herself as an awful sinner, and of Jesus as a spotless Savior, when she clasped her hands, and raising her eyes, prayed to be washed in the precious blood of Christ. As her death drew near she was asked if she was resting her all upon Jesus, when she answered, "Yes, for he is the spotless Lamb of God."

Many beautiful hymns were read to her, and she said, "They are all very good, but I lay my sins on Jesus." In a few days her happy, blood-washed soul was taken to be with Jesus forever.

I know, my dear little readers, that you all want to go to heaven when you die. Many of you have dear friends there, and you cannot endure the thought of being separated from them for ever. But nothing unholy can ever enter that happy world, and you must go to the Lord Jesus to take away your sins and fit you for being with God and his holy angels forever.

I was reading the other day about a dear little child who was sitting at the close of a summer Sabbath-day, looking up into the heavens as the stars were coming out one after another, and appearing to be very thoughtful.

“What are you thinking of, my son?” said his mother.

He started as if suddenly awakened from a dream, and when she repeated the inquiry he could only say, “I was thinking”——

“Yes, my dear child, I knew you were thinking, and I wish you would tell your mother what you were thinking of.”

“Oh, mother,” said he, his little eyes sparkling, “I want to be an angel!”

“And will you tell me, my precious boy, why you would be an angel?”

“Heaven is away up there, mother, and Jesus is there, and the angels love him, and are so good and so happy. I want to be good and go there to love God, and be an angel to wait on him forever.”

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mother's heart very glad. And oh. what a joy it would be to that child's heart to be told the good news that Jesus died for his sins, and could make him fit to be an angel with Him through all eternity. If we ever get to heaven it must be only by the merits of Jesus, not by anything good about ourselves.

A poor heathen man who had been converted by a missionary preaching the good news of the gospel to him, said on his death-bed, "Oh that I might be permitted to remain at the gate of that happy place! — *that* is quite sufficient for me. The happiness of the gate is enough, and more than we can think of. Heaven! — oh, what a blessed place! Oh! what a dreadful thing to die without an interest in Christ! What an awful thing to be lost!" The missionary told him that Jesus promised not only a place at the gate, but even seats on his throne and mansions in his Father's house, to those who put their trust in him. The good news made him die happy.

One part of this good news is, that there is mercy for the very worst of sinners.

A very wicked, careless boy came to Sabbath school once, all clothed in rags. The teacher had picked him up on the streets. The superintendent gave him a suit of clothes on the condition that he would attend regularly. Next Sabbath he was missing. The teacher found him out, and again got him to school. Then for three or four weeks he was absent again. The teacher again sought him out, but found the new clothes that had been given him in rags. Another suit was given him, and again he stayed away for several weeks.

"I must give him up," said the teacher.

"It is hard to give him up and let him go to ruin," said the superintendent; and he exhorted the teacher to try him another month.

"Why," said she, "that second suit you gave him are as bad as the first."

"Well, well, if you will go and try it again, I will give him a third suit."

So she went and brought the boy back for three Sabbaths. On the fourth Sabbath she found to her surprise that he came himself, and from that time

mother's heart very glad. And oh . what a joy it would be to that child's heart to be told the good news that Jesus died for his sins, and could make him fit to be an angel with Him through all eternity. If we ever get to heaven it must be only by the merits of Jesus, not by anything good about ourselves.

A poor heathen man who had been converted by a missionary preaching the good news of the gospel to him, said on his death-bed, "Oh that I might be permitted to remain at the gate of that happy place! — *that* is quite sufficient for me. The happiness of the gate is enough, and more than we can think of. Heaven! — oh, what a blessed place! Oh! what a dreadful thing to die without an interest in Christ! What an awful thing to be lost!" The missionary told him that Jesus promised not only a place at the gate, but even seats on his throne and mansions in his Father's house, to those who put their trust in him. The good news made him die happy.

One part of this good news is, that there is mercy for the very worst of sinners.

A very wicked, careless boy came to Sabbath school once, all clothed in rags. The teacher had picked him up on the streets. The superintendent gave him a suit of clothes on the condition that he would attend regularly. Next Sabbath he was missing. The teacher found him out, and again got him to school. Then for three or four weeks he was absent again. The teacher again sought him out, but found the new clothes that had been given him in rags. Another suit was given him, and again he stayed away for several weeks.

"I must give him up," said the teacher.

"It is hard to give him up and let him go to ruin," said the superintendent; and he exhorted the teacher to try him another month.

"Why," said she, "that second suit you gave him are as bad as the first."

"Well, well, if you will go and try it again, I will give him a third suit."

So she went and brought the boy back for three Sabbaths. On the fourth Sabbath she found to her surprise that he came himself, and from that time

he was most attentive. He was led to the Savior, and became the Rev. Dr. Morrison, who first translated the Bible into the Chinese language, and was a faithful missionary. The good news reached the heart of this bad boy, and melted him down into love; and so it always is when people will open their hearts to receive it.

Let me tell you another case that will illustrate this. A young man had attended church in a certain town, but used to mock and scoff at all good things, till his heart had got very hard. There was a good deal of interest in religion among many, but this youth was careless and thoughtless about his soul.

One day, after meeting, he came up to one of the deacons of the church and said, "Is there any use in my trying to be saved?"

The deacon was so astonished at the question that he remained silent so long that the young man thought he had no comfort to give him.

"You think my case hopeless, then," he said.

"Hopeless, my dear young man — no! It is the

simplest thing in the world for you to be saved. Christ came to save just such sinners as you are."

"What must I do?" said the young man.

The deacon's reply was, "You must just let Christ save you. But before we go any farther, let us ask divine direction and aid."

They knelt, and the deacon offered a prayer suited to their circumstances.

"Now, my young friend," said he, as they rose from their knees.

"You have not much reason to call me young friend," said the youth, in a tone of self-reproach.

"Never mind; the matter we have to talk about is between God and your soul. You are convinced you are a sinner, and need a Savior?"

"I am," he said solemnly.

"You feel that God might justly punish you for your sins?"

"Yes, I feel that I deserve hell."

"Do you believe that Jesus is willing and able to save you?"

"I do not know; I have sinned against great light."

"Whether he is willing to save you or not depends not on what you have done, but on what *he has said.*"

The deacon then took the Bible and read him some passages that contain the good news, such as, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He then said: "The case seems to be a very plain one. You are a lost sinner. Christ came to save you. You must come to him by faith. Go as you are;—you can never make yourself better."

"Do you really mean to say that salvation can be obtained at once?" said this awakened youth.

"Why not? Christ has got to save you, if you ever are saved, and it is as easy for him to save you to-night as at any other time."

"Yes, but will he?" was the anxious question.

"You have heard what he says," said the deacon; "and if I were you I would not add to my sins by doubting his word."

The young man was at length enabled by faith to take a firm hold of Christ, and became a most active and faithful member of the church.

Dear Children,—How much you ought to love the Holy Bible, that contains these good news. Read it often, and wherever you go carry it with you. Never keep company with those who make light of it, or mock and scoff at it. Once, after a great storm, a sailor's chest was found on the sea coast. A Bible was found in it, and on the fly-leaf were these words :

“ A parent's blessing on her son
Goes with this holy thing :
The love that would retain the one
Must to the other cling.
Remember 'tis no common toy ;—
A mother's gift ! Remember, boy.”

Perhaps that sailor boy had been drowned in the storm ; but if he had learned from his Bible the good news above the roar of the waves and the winds, his soul would go to be with Jesus, where storms rage no more.

In the description of a noble vessel lost at sea lately, it was said that a number of the passengers were saved by putting on *life-preservers*. When a man was down in the water, and found that the life-preserver kept him from sinking, and that he was safe until the hand of help could reach him, how glad he would be! But see that other man, who neglected to provide himself with one till it was too late, and now he is sinking in the wild waters. Perhaps he intended to get one before he left home, but put it off carelessly, and now it is too late!

Now, Jesus is the *life-preserver* of the soul. Those who are found trusting in him will be safe, even when great waves of fire shall be rolling across our globe in the day of Judgment. But what terror and despair will those be in who have neglected to come to him!

Dear Children,—Believe the good news about Jesus *now*—before your heart gets hardened—before death suddenly seizes you, and it will be forever too late.

VI.

THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK.

“A man shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Isaiah xxxii: 2.

EAR Children,—This passage refers to the Lord Jesus. It is what is called *figurative* language. For example: If I were to go into a house, and find a person weeping, and in telling it were to say, “I found him bathed in tears,” that would be figurative. When a man is very busy we often say, “He is immersed in business;” and when an audience is very attentive to a speaker people often say, “They hung upon the lips of the speaker,” which you know could not really be done, but is only a figurative way of speaking.

The Bible uses a great deal of this kind of language: for example, where it says — “The sea saw God and was afraid.” At school a number of boys had to write compositions on Christ turning the water into wine. One boy wrote a very short one, but it was in figurative language: “The water saw its Lord and blushed.” The Bible is full of figures of this kind, and most of them to teach us something about Jesus.

Jesus is compared to the sun — “The sun of righteousness.” He is often compared to water — “The water of life.” He is compared to bread — “The bread of life.” He is compared to the road by which we go to any place — “I am the way;” and also to the door by which we get into our homes — “I am the door.” In our text he is compared to “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” In a very little time you will learn to understand all these figures, if you will only *think* and read the Scriptures attentively.

Suppose that you were traveling in some of those very hot countries where there are great sandy

plains and very little water to be found. The blazing sun is right over your head, and the burning sandy desert under your feet. Far as your eyes can see there is nothing but sky and sandy plain ; — not a tree, not a blade of grass, not a flower ! You are ready to faint — your mouth is dry — your throat burning — your eyes bloodshot ! You would give all the world, if you had it, for one drink of good cold water ; but there is none to be found. Perhaps you have been told that there is a river some miles farther on, and when you get there it has all dried up — nothing but stones and dry gravel. You throw yourself on the burning ground, and weep and give yourself up for lost. You wish death would come soon to end your pain.

But what is that away in the distance ? It is a great rock, sending out its cool, refreshing shadow ; and see, right at its base is a clear, cool spring of water. You take new courage and press on, and soon you sit under the shadow of the rock and drink of the pure waters.

Now, all this is a figure to give us some idea of

our miserable state as sinners, and of what pleasure and delight the religion of Jesus gives the soul. Sin makes this world of ours "a weary land." As long as we are sinners we must be unhappy, for God says, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." If you were to see a boy getting up on a cold winter morning, and trying to light his mother's fire with snow and little pieces of ice, you would say that it was a very foolish effort, and that it could never succeed. It would be like trying to make water run up hill. So to sin and be happy at the same time is what many people, young and old, are trying, but it cannot be done.

If you were going to a store with a quarter of a dollar in your hand, with which you wanted to buy something, and let it fall, so that for a time it was lost, you would not expect to find it anywhere else but just where you lost it. If you were to go away to some other street, or to some other town, and go up and down looking for it there, you would be acting very foolishly. But this is the way people look for happiness. We lost our happiness when we

wandered away from God. Man was very happy till he sinned, and then, though he was still in a beautiful paradise, he was miserable. Well, if we would find our happiness again, we must go back where we lost it — we must go to God.

A gentleman once saw two little girls standing on the street, crying as if their very hearts would break. They had been sent on an errand by their mother, and had lost the piece of money which she gave them to buy what she wanted. They were afraid to go home, and stood there in the rain and wind, crying bitterly. "I wish I had never been born!" said the oldest. "Nor me, neither," lisped out the little one. It was a big trouble to them. The gentleman gave them a piece of money like what they had lost, and they went away as happy as before. God, our heavenly Father, can alone make us happy; but then he will not let us be happy while we are going in wicked ways. Sin has made this world a place of tears, and groans, and sighs; but Jesus is "the shadow of a great rock;" let them come there and they will find rest to their souls.

See that dear little girl weeping in that dark room. This world is now a weary land to her. What has happened to her? On the bed near which she sits lies her dead mother. Such an earthly friend she will never have again. Her heart is sad and empty, and she wishes she could only be taken away also; but if she trusts in Jesus he will comfort her, and make her fit to join her mother in the pure world above. So there are no troubles we can have but if we go to Jesus with them he will give us comfort. He will either take away the trouble altogether, or he will give us strength to bear up under it.

The text teaches us that salvation for our souls was provided by God. It is the shadow of a *rock*, not of a house or of a tent, or any thing that man can make. When you see a great rock, you know that no hand but God's made that. So the only religion that can save our souls is the salvation that God has provided—the religion of Christ. Man can make a religion, as is done in the heathen countries, where they make idols, and bow down

and worship them; and as is done in our own country, where people go to a priest and get their sins pardoned! But man's religion is useless; it never saved a soul yet, and it never will. It is only the religion of Christ that can do that. The Bible says, "There is none other name given under heaven, or among men, by which we can be saved, but the name of Jesus."

A gentleman says: "In passing up the street I saw a little boy seated on a curbstone. He seemed to be about five or six years old, and his well-combed hair, clean hands and face, and his bright though well-patched apron, showed that he was the child of a loving though poor mother. As I looked at him closely I was struck with the sad and almost heart-broken expression of his face; so as I always enter into the joys or sorrows of little ones, I asked him what was the matter. He replied by holding up his hand, in which he held the fragments of a broken tin toy — the figure of a cow.

"'Oh! is that all? Well, never mind it. Step into the nearest toy shop, and buy another;' and I

gave him a piece of money, saying, 'That will buy one — will it not?'

" 'Oh yes,' replied he bursting into tears; '*but this was little Tommy's, and he is DEAD!*' "

All the money or toy shops in the world could not supply what the heart of that poor child craved. So, my dear children, no pleasure, no man's religion, no gift, can ever fill and satisfy your heart, — but the love of Jesus can.

During the time of a great revival in a city in the east, a man that had been an infidel for years was led to see himself a lost sinner. Before the whole congregation he came forward where Christians were praying for those who felt anxious about their souls, and kneeling down, cried out in an agony, "God of my mother, have mercy on me!" His mother had been a good praying woman, perhaps now in her grave. He had wandered far from her God, and despised the kind advice she had given him, and now he wanted the God she served to be his God. He found the shadow of the great rock.

A good praying mother had a little son who was

often very naughty. One day she had to punish him by shutting him up in his room. He escaped by the window, and could no where be found. He ran away from home and got on a vessel going to a distant port. Here he suffered a great deal from want of food, and no one was kind to him. Oh, how sorry he was that he ever left home and his dear mother!

His father was a sea captain, and to his great joy his father's vessel came into the very port where he was. He ran to him and confessed his fault, asking forgiveness. In a few days he sailed for Havana. Here the little boy was taken with yellow fever. He feared he should die, and all his sins crowded around him.

One day, when all hope of his ever getting better was gone, his father came to his bedside and found him weeping and sobbing. "My mother — my dear mother!" said he. "Oh, that she were here, to pray for me as she used to!"

His father was not a Christian. He bent over his boy with a bleeding heart, and his tears mingled with his son's.

"Father, I am dying with my sins upon me! I shall be lost in my present state! Send—oh, send for some one to pray for me!"

"My child," said the father, trembling with deep feeling, "there are none but Roman Catholic priests on the island, and they cannot help you."

"Oh, what shall I do then, father?" said the boy.

"Pray for yourself, my dear child," was the reply.

"I do," said he, "but I need the help of others. Oh! *can* you not—*will* you not, father, pray yourself for your perishing son?"

The father felt dreadfully. He had never prayed, but had lived a wicked life. His heart was melted, however. The Spirit of God brought up to the boy's remembrance the many promises about Jesus in the Bible. He came by faith as a poor lost sinner to Jesus, and all his sins were blotted out. He found peace to his soul;—he went under the shadow of the great rock. He died in a few hours, and his blood-washed soul went to be forever with Jesus. The captain became a converted man.

You see, my young friends, the vast need of having the Scriptures in your mind. That boy no doubt thought it very hard when his mother made him commit passages out of the Word of God—he would much rather have been out playing; but it saved his soul. It is from the Bible that the true, pure religion of God can be found, and the more you get of that holy book into your mind the better. It is able to make you wise unto salvation.

When Dr. Judson was on one of his missionary tours, among the Karens, a native came to him and said, "Are you the Jesus Christ man?" He had heard a little about Jesus from the missionary before, and now he had traveled many hundred miles to learn more. "Give me more writing that tells about Jesus Christ," said he. How thankful you ought to be that you have Bibles and tracts. and other good books to teach you about Jesus.

The text teaches us that the salvation of Christ is something that endures. Rocks are firm and fixed. You perhaps remember reading in the Bible about Jonah's gourd. He was exposed to the burn-

ing rays of the sun, and God caused a great gourd to grow up and shelter him; but a little worm began to gnaw at its root, and it soon withered away. So it is with all things in this world; they pass away — no matter how much you may love them. Like the beautiful flower you took out of the garden. You loved it, and thought it was so sweet you would keep it a long time. You went to sleep with it near you, but when you opened your eyes in the morning it was withered.

But Jesus never changes. He is “the same yesterday, to-day and forever.” If you live to be a man you will think of the changes that have taken place since you were a boy, and of how many of those you used to play with who are dead. But Jesus lives forever. He will always be your friend, if you trust in him. Your dear parents may die and leave you, — you may be among strangers, and, sick and poor, have no one to speak a kind word to you; but Jesus will be on your side, and if HE be for you, who can be against you?

Here is a rich man, who has a great deal of

money in his bank. He gives you his check, a little piece of paper, with his name on it, and you go to the bank and get money on his account, for his sake. But in the changes that take place he becomes a poor man, and has no money in the bank, and he may give you his check and the use of his name, but it would do you no good, for his name has lost its power.

But it is never so with the name of Jesus. You go to heaven's bank at any time, by day or by night, and plead his name and present his promise, and you will not be refused. His name never loses its power.

"I've found the pearl of greatest price—
My heart doth sing for joy;
And sing I must—a Christ I have—
All gold, without alloy.

"Christ is my Savior and my Friend—
My Brother, yet my Lord;
My Head, my Hope, my Counsellor—
My Advocate with God.

"My Savior is the Heaven of heaven,
And what shall I him call?
My Christ is First, My Christ is Last—
My Christ is ALL IN ALL!"

VII.

GOD IS LOVE.

“God is love.” I John iv: 8.



DEAR Children,—I am now going to speak to you about God, and we must be very careful what we say, for he will hear every word, and his eyes will be upon you, to see whether you are giving attention to what I am saying about him. There are some very foolish people, who will not believe there is a God, because they cannot see him. You never saw London, or Paris, or Washington, perhaps, and yet you know very well that these places exist. You never saw such men as Washington, or Judson, or Carey, or Wesley, and yet you know these good men existed.

When you have been looking out of the window on a stormy day, you have seen the trees rocking and swaying to and fro, and the clouds moving on, and the people on the street struggling along, as if something was pushing them back. What caused all this? "Why it was the wind," you say. But did you ever *see* the wind? No, but you have seen its effects. In the same way, though you cannot see God, you see his works, and what he is doing every day all around you.

Dr. Beattie, a very learned man, tells of a plan he took to teach his little boy that there is a God :

"In the corner of a little garden," he says, "without informing any person of the circumstance, I wrote in a mound, with my finger, the three initial letters of his name, and sowing water-cresses in the furrows, covered up the seed and smoothed the ground. Ten days after this he came running to me, and, with astonishment in his countenance, told me that his name was growing in the garden. I laughed at the report, and seemed inclined to dis-

regard it; but he insisted on my going to see what had happened.

“‘Yes,’ said I, carelessly, on coming to the place, ‘I see it is so; but what is there in this worth notice? Is it not mere chance?’ and I went away.

“He followed me, and taking hold of my coat, said with some earnestness, ‘It cannot have happened by chance; somebody must have contrived matters so as to produce it.’

“‘So you think,’ said I, ‘that what appears as the letters of your name cannot be by chance?’

“‘Yes,’ said he, with firmness, ‘I think so.’

“‘Look at yourself,’ I replied, ‘and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and other limbs. Are they not regular in their appearance, and useful to you?’ He said they were. ‘Came you then hither by chance?’ said I.

“‘No,’ he answered, ‘that cannot be;—something must have made me.’

“‘And who is that something?’ I asked.

“‘I do not know,’ he said.

“I had now gained the point I aimed at, and saw

that his reason taught him, though he could not express it, that what *begins to be* must have a cause, and that what is formed in regularity must have an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the Great Being who made him and all the world."

You will all think that this was a very good way this little boy's father took to let him see that there is a God. Nobody of good sense could believe that even a confused heap of stones upon the street came there by chance, much less that these stones should form themselves into walls, and into the rooms of a nice, comfortable house, all by chance.

I have heard of a young man who was told by an infidel that he would not believe anything but what he could see, and he asked him if he had ever seen his brains.

The infidel flushed and stammered, and at last said, "No."

"Well, then," said the young man, "according to your own reasoning we ought to believe that you have not got any."

This was answering a fool according to his folly. The Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

This Great God, who made all things, and who is constantly near us, who hears all we say and sees all we think, has us completely in his power. He can make us happy or miserable. He can take everything that we like away from us, or continue them, and even give us a great deal more. Now it is a very serious question—Does God love us or hate us? We are not able to get an answer to this question from looking at God's works. In a beautiful summer day, when the birds are singing and the flowers are blooming, and the trees are loaded with fruit, and the fields are smiling with plenty, we might think that God was love; but when the wild storm comes, blowing down houses, tearing trees up by their roots, drowning people in the raging sea, or swallowing up whole cities by an earthquake, we would be apt to think that God was angry with us, and hated us.

So you see that to know for certain how God

feels toward us we must go to the Bible. That is the only safe and sure guide; and in that good book we learn that God loves us. Jesus came to let us know how his Father feels toward us, and HE must know, for he has been with his Father from all eternity, and knows all that is in his heart. You know that if you live with a person, you get to know him much better than when you meet him now and then in company; and Jesus, who was with his Father before the angels were made, or the stars, or this world, tells us how God feels toward us, though we have sinned against him. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

My dear children, — If you believe in God's love to you, it will make you love him. The holy Apostle John was a very good man. His heart overflowed with love to everybody. He was the youngest of all of Christ's disciples, and Jesus loved him very much. But he was not always good. There was a time when he did not love God. What was

it that changed him, and filled his heart full of love? He tells us himself—"We love him because he first loved us."

As soon as we begin to love God we will love all around us, and try to make them happier and better. I will tell you of a conversation that once took place between a dear little girl and her aunt, which will show you this.

"I should like to be a missionary, Aunt Mary," said little Ellen, "just like Uncle William. Do you think he would take me with him?"

"And leave mamma?" said a kind voice behind her.

"Oh no, mamma! I had quite forgotten that. I never could leave you; but still, I *do* wish I was a missionary."

"And if my little girl had her wish granted, what would she do?"

"I would tell the little children about gentle Jesus, mamma, and how he loves them, and I would try to get them to love him, that they might go to heaven."

“ Well, Ellen, I am willing you should be a missionary ; but can you not begin at home ? You can set a good example to your brother ; for if you are dutiful and affectionate, he will try to imitate you ; and as he cannot read yet, you can teach him your texts and hymns, and tell him the Bible stories you are so fond of.”

“ Oh, thank you, dear mamma, I *can* do that,” said Ellen, joyfully ; “ and now will you please to give me a nice little verse to teach Willie ? ”

“ Will this do, Ellen ? — ‘ Little children, love one another. ’ ”

Ellen looked very grave, for she remembered that often, when her little brother teased her, she was apt to get angry, and to forget altogether that there was such a verse in the Bible. However, she went to look for Willie ; and when she found him they sat down together, and she taught him the text, and then in her own simple way tried to explain it.

Poor Ellen ! The day so well begun was not to end without a trial of her love. When she went to play with Willie, after dinner, he was sitting on the

nursery floor, tearing out leaf after leaf from her pretty "Bible Story Book."

"Oh, Willie, Willie! you naughty, wicked boy!" she cried, "how *could* you spoil my book?"

"Little children, love one another," whispered conscience; but Ellen was not ready to listen to it. When she saw how grieved her mamma looked, however, and heard her say, "Ellen, is *that* a missionary spirit?" she was very, *very* sorry, and ran away, weeping bitterly.

When her mamma had quieted Willie, and told him how wrong it was to destroy his sister's things, she went to look for Ellen. Where do you think she found her? She was kneeling by the side of her little bed, and praying that Jesus would forgive her naughty temper and help her to overcome it; and that kind Saviour, who listens to the little ones when they pray, heard her and granted her request; for after that time, though harsh words sometimes came to her lips, she tried earnestly to check them, and she almost always succeeded. Day after day, too, she continued her "missionary" work, and

talked to Willie, and prayed with him, and taught him to pray for himself; for she knew that if all the good people in the world were to pray for us ever so much, we must pray for ourselves also. She taught Willie to love Jesus.

But when the Bible tells us that God loves sinners, we should remember that he hates their sins. Here is a little boy who has a good, loving mother. That mother loves him better than the whole world besides. If that mother were to die, his best earthly friend would be gone. As Mrs. Sigourney says:

“ Ah, never from your hearts erase
Your blessed mother's name !
Good night !— Go say the prayer she taught
Beside your little bed.
The lips that used to press you there
Are silent with the dead.”

Now, if that mother were to hear that her little boy had begun to steal, and to lie, and to say bad words, she would still love him, but she would hate and loathe his bad ways. Perhaps you remember reading in the Bible that King David had a very

wicked son, who was called Absalom. His face was very handsome to look upon, but his heart was vile and ugly. His good father hated his bad ways very much; but when one came and told him that this wicked son had been killed in battle, he wept and cried, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee!" You see, though he loved that son so tenderly, still he hated his bad ways.

It is so with God. He hates sin with a perfect hatred, and will surely punish those who will not repent of it and forsake it; but he loves sinners, and longs to have them come to his dear Son, and be made happy in his love. This love he has proved by what he has done for us. If you were in a burning building, and none could be found who would be willing to risk their lives to go into the flames and take you out; if at last one that you had abused and spoken a great deal against were to rush in and carry you out through the flames and the smoke, would you not think that this was a great proof of his love?

At the battle of Fort Donelson a soldier saw one of the rebels aiming at the heart of his captain, when he rushed in between the danger and his beloved officer, and received his death wound ! The father of that officer had taken that soldier when he was a little boy, and been very kind to him, and he laid down his life to save his son.

But the love of God will do us no good unless we believe it. Do you ask, "How am I to believe?" How do you believe that your mother loves you? When she says that she loves you, and proves it by so many kind acts, how can you help believing it? There was once going to be an excursion on a railroad, and bills were posted up, saying, "Children under six years of age free." Now if you were under that age, you would know that you could go free. Your very name might not be in the bill, but you would know that it meant you.

The gospel tells us that sinners who believe in Jesus are saved freely for his sake. You know that you are a sinner, and therefore you know that Jesus died for you, the same as if your name had been

mentioned in the Bible. Say like Paul, "He loved me and gave himself for me."

"Come let us lift our joyful eyes
Up to the courts above,
And smile to see our Father there
Upon a throne of love."



VIII.

BREAD FOR THE SOUL.

"I am the Bread of Life." John vi: 35.



THE meaning of this is, that the soul needs food as well as the body; that just as people would die if they had no food for their bodies, so will they die who do not take the food provided for their souls. Jesus is the food for the soul; that is, to believe in him, to trust in what he did for us when he died upon the cross for us, gives our souls life and strength.

There are different kinds of life. There is the life which vegetables have when we say that a tree or a plant is alive or that it is dead. There is the life that animals have, which have no souls, and when they die will be no more. Then there is

spiritual life, that men and angels have, which makes them nearer to God than the other creatures which he has made, that have not this life. Now, Jesus is the author of all these different kinds of life. Not a blade of grass grows, not a flower blooms, not a tree sends out its beautiful shade, but it has got its life from Jesus. Every bird that flies through the air, every fish that darts through the waters, and every beast that feeds in the fields or roams through the forest, all get their life from Jesus; for the Bible says, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."

You see, then, that all the food in the world was made by Jesus. It is he who feeds all the people and all the animals in the world, and he opens his hand liberally to supply their wants. If all the food eaten by a large city in one year were put down in an open plain, it would be like a great mountain. How very great, then must be the food used by all the people in the world in one year! Yet, year after year God feeds them, though a great

many of them never thank him, and many even curse him !

A great multitude of people followed Jesus one day out into a desert place, to listen to his preaching, and to get him to heal their sick. It began to grow late in the afternoon, and the people were very hungry. Jesus had compassion on them, for they were far from their homes, and there was no place near where they could get any food to buy. The disciples had only a few loaves and fishes with them. But Jesus told the people to sit down in rows upon the grass, fifty in a row ; and if you had been there, and counted the people after they sat down, you would have found five thousand. He then took the five loaves and the two small fishes, and before all the people he lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed over them, and all at once they began to multiply, till that great crowd had all got as much as they could eat, and even then there was a great deal left.

After the people were all satisfied he said, " Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing

be lost." You see that though Jesus could make food whenever he pleased, he did not wish a single crumb to be wasted. Let this teach you, dear children, that it is very wicked to waste food. Jesus will punish all who waste it, and very often does so, even in this world, by letting them come to want. "Waste not, want not," is a good proverb.

Hundreds of years before this, Jesus had fed great multitudes in the wilderness, in a way as wonderful as this. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, after they left Egypt, they had nothing to eat. Their little ones were crying for bread, and they had none to give them. They were all in great distress, and began to call upon God for help. One morning, when they woke up and looked out of their tents, they saw some white thing lying upon the ground. It was not the time of year for snow; so the people went out to look at it, and began to taste it. It was sweet and good, and now they knew that the Lord had heard their prayer, and sent this food to keep them from starvation.

What a lively time they would have gathering it!

Little half-starved boys and girls would be out gathering and eating it, and mothers would be carrying it to their little children; and surely they would look up and thank God for his goodness. He had rained down bread to them from heaven, and they called it *manna*. Now, although God does not work a miracle to feed you, yet he does just as truly feed you as if you were to see it coming right down from heaven. Let me here quote a conversation which a little girl had with her mother, that will show you this fact.

"Mamma," said little Lucy one day, "what does it mean in the Bible where it says 'God feedeth the ravens when they cry?'"

"The same way, my dear," said mamma, "in which he feeds your little brother Henry, when he cries and reaches out his little hand toward the store-closet for milk or bread."

"Why, mamma," said Lucy, looking very serious and very much surprised, "it is you who feed Henry. You ask if he is hungry, and he makes a little sign that means 'yes,' and then you go and get him

something. I know you do it, mamma, for I see you do so every day."

"Get your Bible, love, and open it at the sixth chapter of Matthew, and read from the twenty-sixth verse."

Lucy did so, and then waited for her mother to explain.

"Well, Lucy, does not Jesus Christ say that our heavenly Father feeds and clothes us?"

"Yes, mamma; but I don't see how."

"I will tell you, my dear. How do we get this nice sweet milk for Henry's supper?"

"The cow gives it, mamma."

"But who made the cow?"

"God," replied Lucy, with a brightening face; for she already began to see through her troubles.

"Yes," said mamma, "God made her, and made her to give milk. And what is this bread made of?"

"Flour, mamma."

"What is the flour made of?"

"Wheat, I believe."

"Yes, and who makes the wheat?"

Lucy sat still thinking.

“Do you remember, Lucy, going with me to your uncle’s farm, last spring, and going out with you to see him sow?”

“Oh yes! he took little mites of seeds and buried them up, and said he had sown them.”

“What did you see yesterday, in the same place?”

“Beautiful tall trees, mamma.”

“Stalks, my dear;—well, these come from the little seeds, and they will all be gathered in and made into flour, to make bread, for Henry to eat. Do n’t you see now that God feeds Henry?”

“Yes, mamma; but how does he feed the ravens?”

“By making the old ravens care for them, and and fly about, seeking food; just as I go to the closet to see if Catharine has got any bread there for my babies. The little baby raven cannot fly, but must stay in the little warm nest, as Henry must stay in the nursery. So when they get hungry they open their mouths and make a noise, which means ‘Give me something to eat.’ Then the old mother bird hops up and flies off, and finds some nice

crumbs, and comes flying back to the nest, and the little birds open their mouths again, and in drops the nice little breakfast. Then they feel as comfortable as dear little brother does there, laughing and crowing after his supper."

"Why, mamma," said Lucy, with a smile on her round face, "how pretty, and how kind in the Great God!—is n't it, mamma?"

"Yes, my love; he is indeed full of loving kindness and tender mercy. I hope my little Lucy and Henry will learn always to love him and cry to him in every trouble."

Dear little readers,—I have tried to make you feel that it is Jesus who feeds your bodies, so that you might be able to see the meaning of the figure that Jesus is the bread of life to the soul. You may have plenty to eat, and plenty of good warm clothes to wear, and a nice comfortable home to live in; and yet, if you are not living by faith in Jesus, your soul will starve and die. Many a boy and girl, whose body is growing large and strong, has a little, sickly, starved soul in that body, because

it is not feeding upon the love of Christ. When your body is sick, people can see how bad you look; but they cannot see the soul, and so you and your friends are not alarmed about its sickly condition!

Suppose, when the children of Israel were starving for bread, and God sent down the manna from heaven to them, that a number of them had refused to go out and gather it as God commanded, would you not think that they deserved to die of hunger? Because in their own folly they would be starving in the midst of plenty! So is it in regard to Christ. There is all in him that the soul can need: pardon for our sins, grace to help in time of need, strength for our weakness, light for our darkness, comfort for our sorrow, and the supply of all our wants; yet the soul stays away from him till it perishes in the midst of gospel plenty!

As bread must be eaten for ourselves, or it will do us no good, so every one must believe in Jesus for himself. The father cannot eat for the child, nor can one brother eat for another. Each must eat for himself, or he will die. Sometimes, in the

family, when John is told to do something, he will say "Why don't you make Willie do it?" But you never hear them say, "Why don't you make Willie or James eat my dinner for me?" No,—they are all wide awake to eat for themselves when they are hungry. So it is that every one must go to Jesus for himself. I once read of an old lady who was very poor, but she was a good Christian. A gentleman went to her door one evening, just as she was sitting down to her supper, which consisted of a crust of dry bread and cold water, and she thanked God that she had "All this and Christ besides." Though she had not much of this world to live upon, she was living on Christ, and that made her happy.

It will not do to only know that there is bread, or to know that the bread is good, or to know how it is made,—we must eat it to get strength from it. Children may attend Sabbath School, and learn a great deal about Jesus—they may commit to memory many texts of Scripture and many beautiful hymns that tell about Jesus; but unless they receive

him into their hearts by faith, it will do them no good. We must live by faith in Jesus, both for our souls and bodies.

A pious lady, who was going out among the poor, doing good, one cold day last winter, tried to open a door in the third story of a wretched house, when she heard a little voice say, "Pull the string up high—pull the string up high!"

She looked up and saw a string, which on being pulled lifted up a latch, and she went in. She found there two half-naked little children, all alone, and looking very cold. The following conversation took place :

"Do you take care of yourselves little ones?" asked the lady.

"God takes care of us," said the oldest.

"And are you not cold? No fire on a day like this?"

"Oh, when we are very cold we creep under the quilt, and I put my arms around Tommy, and Tommy puts his arms around me, and we say, 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' and then we get warm."

"And what do you have to eat my child?" inquired the lady.

"When granny comes home she always fetches us something. Granny calls us God's sparrows, and we say, 'Our Father,' and 'Give us this day our daily bread,' every day, for God is our Father."

The tears came into the good woman's eyes to hear words of such simple trust from these dear little ones. Their wants were supplied for the rest of that winter, and no doubt God sent that lady there to do so in answer to their prayers.

You know, dear children, that you might be sitting at a table with a great deal of food upon it; but if you did not reach forth your hand and take it, you might starve. Now, faith is the hand that takes Christ and applies his merits to our own case. We do not care for bread unless we are hungry, and we do not care about Christ until the Holy Spirit makes us feel our need of him; then it is that we "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

A chaplain tells us that he got wounded on the battle-field, so that he could not walk. As he lay

there on the ground he heard the cry of the dying all around him, asking God to have mercy upon them. Their souls were hungry for Christ. So the noble chaplain, though he was suffering a great deal of pain himself, rolled over from one dying man to another, pointing them to the Lamb of God. At last two men took him up and carried him the whole night from one part of the battle field to another, to tell poor souls about Jesus. Many of these soldiers had been little boys at the Sabbath School, but they neglected to seek Jesus at that time; and now, when death was upon them, how awful their sins would seem!

If we have found the bread of life to our souls, we will be anxious that all others should find it. You will want to tell all your little companions about Jesus and his love, and invite them to come and see that the Lord is good.

A missionary in the West Indies called on the people for a little help to spread the gospel, when a poor negro came forward, and putting his hand into his pocket, took out some silver, saying, "Dat's for

me, massa;" then another parcel from another pocket — "Dat's for my wife, massa;" and another still — "Dat's for my child, massa." When asked if he were not giving too much, he said, "God's work must be done, massa, and I may be dead."

"A little child I am, indeed,
And little do I know;
Much care and help I yet shall need,
That I may wiser grow —
If I would ever hope to do
Things great and good, and useful, too.

"One gentle word that I could speak,
Or one kind loving deed,
May, though a trifle, poor and weak,
Prove like a tiny seed;
And who can tell what good may spring
From such a very little thing."

"Then let me try, each day and hour,
To act upon this plan;
What little good is in my power,
To do it while I can.
If to be useful thus I try,
I may do better by-and-by."

IX.

THE GOOD BOOK.

"O, how I love thy law." Ps. cxix: 97.



DEAR Children,—I hope you like to read good books. That is one way to grow up to be wise and useful. I like to see young people have a love for reading. It is both a pleasant and a profitable way of spending your spare time, and will keep you from idle habits. Idleness exposes young people to great temptations; for if they are not doing something useful, they will be doing something bad. But you must read only good books. What poison is to the body, bad books are to the mind: poison will kill the body, and bad books will kill the soul. Many a person have I

heard upon their death-bed tell how very sorry they were that they had ever read these wicked books. As you are too young to know what books you ought to read, you should only read those that your parents or some Christian friend would recommend. Their experience will help you.

If you were out walking some day, and a little book was to drop down at your feet, and you were told that it came from one of those bright stars that shine over your head, telling you all about when God made that star, what kind of beings live in it, whether they ever sinned, or, like the holy angels, love and praise God with perfect hearts,—if that little book told you all this, and also a great deal of the history of that world, and of how the beings in it have acted toward each other,—would you not like to read that book? I know you would read it with a great deal of interest.

Well, here is the Bible, which tells us all about our own world, when God made man, how man became a sinner, how God sent a Saviour, and a great deal about the history of our world that we could

never know in any other way than from this book. Now should you not love to read it? It is the oldest book in the world. If you were to be introduced to a man who had lived upon the earth when Jesus was here in person, who had seen and conversed with the apostles, and who had even seen our Lord taken up into heaven, how pleased you would be to listen to his talk. But here is a book that tells you of things that happened thousands of years ago, and told by persons who were eye witnesses of most of the events.

But the great reason why you should love the Bible is, that it tells you the way to be saved. Suppose you had wandered into a thick, dark wood, and got lost. You wander around and around, trying to find your way out, but you cannot.. At last, night comes on, and a thick gloom gathers all around you. Looking up through the tops of the trees you see the stars coming out one after another and you think of your home and dear friends, and of the long, lonely night you must spend in the woods, and your heart is like to break with sorrow.

But hark! — some one is coming. It is a man who speaks very kindly to you, and tells you a great many things you did not know before; but there is one thing he cannot tell you, and that is the *one thing* above all others that you want to know — how you can get out of the woods and find your dear home? He can tell you who is the owner of the wood, how large it is, and the kind and size of the trees; but when you ask him, in great sorrow, “How am I to get home?” he shakes his head and says, “I cannot tell.”

You would not think that man was much of a guide. But it is not so with the Bible. We are lost, and it tells us how we may be saved and get to our beautiful home in the heavens.

I was reading the other day about a poor little sick girl who lived in a great city in England. Her mother was a widow, and had to go out and work all day to earn their bread, and so the sick child was left all day alone. But what was worse than all, she did not know about Jesus. A little girl, whose name was Ruth, went in to see the sick child,

and sang to her some very sweet hymns. One of them had this verse in it:

“ We read within the Holy Word
Of how our Saviour died,
And also those great drops of blood
He shed at eventide.”

When the hymn was sung the sick child said, “ I can’t read ; I never went to school long enough to learn.”

“ What ! can ’t you read the Bible ? ” said Ruth.

“ No, I can ’t read anything ; I don ’t know anything about it.”

“ I can tell you all about it,” said Ruth, “ I know such a number of stories out of the Bible, and I know a great many verses, and some chapters and hymns.”

“ I like stories best,” said the sick child.

“ Well, then, I will tell you one. Let me see, — which shall I tell you ? Oh, I know ! Once there was a good man, his name was David, and he was quite young. He didn’t live in a town like this, but he lived in beautiful green fields, and on great

high hills, where the flowers and the trees grow and the birds sing. He loved God, and Jesus our Saviour, and he prayed to God. He lived alone on the great hills, and God took care of him; and he had a great many sheep and lambs, and they all ate the grass and were so happy, and he took care of them all. But one day there came a great roaring lion; he came so quietly, and he took a little lamb in his great mouth, and ran away so fast! But the little lamb cried out, and David heard it, and he caught the great lion and killed him, and he took the little lamb in his arms, and carried it back quite safe to its mother. Isn't that a pretty story? And I know what my teacher tells about it."

"What does she tell you?" asked the poor child.

"She tells us that it is just like Jesus, our Saviour, when Satan, the great roaring lion, tries to take us away. If we pray to Jesus he won't let him have us, but Jesus will take us up safe in his arms and carry us to heaven when we die, and then we shall be so happy there!"

"Will he carry me?"

"Yes, he will, if you trust in him and pray to him."

"I don't know how to pray."

"I will teach you my prayer," said little Ruth. "O God, my heavenly Father, give me thy Holy Spirit, to teach me to know and love thee. Wash me from all my sins in my Saviour's precious blood. Keep me from all evil, and make me ready to live with thee in heaven forever,—all for the sake of Jesus, my Saviour. Amen."

The poor child tried to learn it, but she could not remember all the words. At last she said, "Wash me from all my sins. What are *sins*?"

"That is when we do wrong," said little Ruth. "We can't go with our bad ways to heaven, but Jesus can wash them all away in his blood."

One day Ruth went in to see her little friend, and found her dying. She opened her eyes, and seeing Ruth standing at her bedside, said, "Dear Ruth, I am quite happy. I love you very much, and I want you to sing that hymn about those great drops of blood Jesus shed at eventide."

Ruth sang it as well as she could, but she was ready to cry.

"I want you to sing it over and over, as you do to the baby," said the dying child.

Ruth sang it two or three times, and then she stopped. The poor child had closed her eyes and seemed asleep; but she soon opened them again, and said, "Oh, do sing 'Jesus let me to thy bosom fly!'" And while Ruth sang, and the mother stood weeping, the little girl's happy soul went to Jesus.

Here you see the little girl found the Bible a true guide, because it taught her how to be saved — how she could reach her dear home in heaven. Ought you not, then, to love the Bible very much, and to pay great attention to every word that it says to you?

David, the King of Israel, loved the Scriptures very much. It was he who said, "O how I love thy law!" He lived in a great palace, having many splendid rooms in it, glittering with silver and gold, and he had many great and wise men around him, and yet he loved to read and to meditate on the

Word of God. He wrote the whole Bible with his own hand, copying it off upon parchment. He was rich enough to have employed a man to do this; but if you will turn over to the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy, and at the eighteenth verse you will see that God commanded all the kings to do this when they came to the throne of Israel.

The Bible is now so cheap that everybody can have one; or, if they are so very poor that they cannot buy one, there are societies that will give them one for nothing. Bibles used to be so scarce, and cost so much, that there would only be one in a whole parish. It was a large Bible, in thick, strong, iron-bound covers, and was chained to the desk of the parish church, lest some one would carry it away. But few of the people could read in those days, and often a number of people would gather around a reader, to hear the true words of God. How much more favored are we, who can each have a Bible of our own, and can read it for ourselves, none daring to make us afraid!

The Rev. Mr. Arvine says: "A little boy had

been amusing himself often by looking over the pictures in a large Bible, and his mother one day said to him —

“John, my son, do you know the use of the Bible?’

“‘No, mother,’ said he.

“‘Then, John, be sure you ask your father,’ was the advice she gave him.

“Soon after John ran up to his father and said, ‘I should like to know, father, what is the use of the Bible?’

“His father said, ‘I will tell you another time, John.’ The boy appeared disappointed and walked away.

“A few days after this the father took his son to a house where a woman was very ill in bed, and began to talk to her. She said she had suffered a great deal of pain, but hoped she was resigned to the will of God.

“‘Do you think,’ said the father, ‘that God does right in permitting you to feel so much pain?’

“‘Oh yes,’ replied the woman, ‘for God is my

heavenly Father, who loves me, and I am sure that He would not permit me to suffer as I do if it was not for my good.'

"He then said, 'How is it that you find your sufferings do you good?'

"She replied, 'My sufferings are good for my soul: they make me more humble, more patient; they make me feel the value of the Saviour more, and to pray more, and I am sure all this is good for me.'

"John had been very attentive to this conversation, and the tears stood in his eyes while the afflicted woman was talking. His father looked at him, and then said to the woman, 'My good woman, can you tell me what is the use of the Bible?' John was extremely eager to hear her answer.

"The woman, with a stronger voice than before, said, 'Oh, sir, the Bible has been my comfort in my affliction!'

"'There, John,' said his father, 'now you know one use of the Bible: it can give us comfort when we most need it.'"

Yes, dear children, the Bible is the best comforter. Many of my little readers have not yet known what trouble is; but the time will come when you will be in trouble, for this is a world of trouble, and we all must take our share of it. Here is a poor boy who has lost his parents. He thinks of all their kindness to him, and of the happy home he had with them, and his heart is very sad; and when he saw them laid in the grave he thought with deep sorrow of all the sins of disobedience and neglect of their advice that he had committed against them. Oh, how he longs to have them back again!

Now, let that poor orphan boy take up the Bible, and it will comfort him. He will find there these words: "When father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." He will hear God say, "I will be a Father to the Fatherless." And when he comes to be sick and dying, the Bible will be his comfort. Its promises will be a pillow under his aching head.

A good minister during a severe sickness said, "It is all Christ. I keep death in view. If God

does not please to raise me up, he intends me better. To recollect a promise of the Bible — *this* is substance! Nothing will do but the Bible. If I read authors, and hear different opinions, I cannot say this is truth — I cannot grasp it as substance; but the Bible gives me something to *hold*." This is what all feel who have tried the Bible.

In one of the coal mines of England, one of the workmen was a Christian, and always took his Bible with him in his pocket, so that if he had a few moments to spare through the day, he could draw comfort from it. His little son wrought along with him, and he, too, was a Christian, and always carried his little Testament, which he got at Sabbath School, along with him. One day, while they were at work, a great arch above them suddenly fell between father and son. The father thought his son was crushed, and running to the place called his name loudly. The youth answered in a feeble voice, from beneath a great mass of earth and coal.

"My son, are you living?" cried the father.

"Yes, father,; but my legs are under a rock."

Yes, dear children, the Bible is the best comforter. Many of my little readers have not yet known what trouble is; but the time will come when you will be in trouble, for this is a world of trouble, and we all must take our share of it. Here is a poor boy who has lost his parents. He thinks of all their kindness to him, and of the happy home he had with them, and his heart is very sad; and when he saw them laid in the grave he thought with deep sorrow of all the sins of disobedience and neglect of their advice that he had committed against them. Oh, how he longs to have them back again!

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"My son, are you living?" cried the father.

"Yes, father,; but my legs are under a rock."

"Where is your lamp, my son?"

"It is still burning," was the reply.

"What will you do, my dear son?"

"I am reading my Testament, my father, and the Lord strengthens me!"

These were the last words of this dear boy, for before they could reach him he was dead.

Read the Bible every day of your lives. You will find there something that will do you good—nothing but good. If you read novels they will excite and please you while you are reading them; but after you have got through, you have got nothing solid—only a mouthful of froth!

I used to see a poor crazy boy come to a well with a basket, and pump and pump until the sweat ran off his face, trying to fill his basket with water! Of course he never got it filled. That is just like those young people who try to fill their empty minds by reading novels. Read your Bibles and such books as will give you useful information, so that you may grow up good and useful men and women; and when you read the Scriptures pray for the Holy

Spirit to open your minds to understand them and your hearts to love them. He is the author of the Scriptures, and can explain them to you as no other can. Pray, therefore, with David — “Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law.”



X

THE CONVERTED CHILD.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Ps. li: 10.



DEAR Children,—It is a very common thing to hear children wishing for changes. If it is summer, they keep wishing that winter would come, with the snow and the ice, the sleighing and the skating; and when it is winter, they wish it was summer, with the beautiful flowers and the nice fruit, the balmy days and the singing of birds. When they live in the country they wish that they lived in the city, and when in the city they wish they were in the country; and although they are now having the happiest time they will perhaps ever have in all their lives, yet

they are always wishing that they were grown up and had done with schools, and lessons, and books.

This restless wishing for change is not right. You should learn to be contented with the place and the state that God has placed you in. But there is one change that I do want you to wish and pray for, and that is a change of heart. Without this you never can be happy in this world, and you never can be fit for heaven.

You were born with a wicked heart—a heart that goes astray from God from the moment that you begin to know anything. God says, “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child;,” and again he says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” You may think your heart very good, but God must know best; and the blessed Saviour says, “Ye must be born again.” Heaven is a very holy place, and we never will be fit to live there till we get a new heart.

There are some people who think that mere outward changes are what is meant by conversion. If they do not use bad words nor tell falsehoods, if

they go to Sabbath School and church regularly, if they read their Bibles and say their prayers, if they are kind to their companions and do not disobey their parents, they think that is all God will ask of them. But suppose you had a little boy who did almost everything outwardly that you asked him, yet you could see that he did not love you in his heart—he did everything from fear of being punished, and nothing out of love to you, you would not like that; you would want his heart to be changed, so that he would love you, and do everything you wished from love.

Now God looks at our hearts, and unless they are filled with love to him, our doing a great many outward things because we are afraid of being sent to hell, is no obedience at all. The beasts in a menagerie often do what they are told, but it is because they are afraid of the keeper. If it was not for that fear they would tear him into pieces. So sinners often hate God in their hearts, at the same time that they attend church and do many things that are outwardly good.

I heard of a little boy who wrote down eight resolutions, and determined to keep them. "First, I will never use a wicked word. Second, I will never speak a fretful or saucy word to my father or mother. Third, I will never tease my brothers, sisters, or playmates. Fourth, I will never drink liquors that make people drunk. Fifth, I will always tell the exact truth. Sixth, I will not play with wicked children. Seventh, I will be honest in all my dealings. Eighth, I will love God and keep his commandments, trusting in Jesus for grace to help me every moment."

These resolutions are very good, and yet if that boy was to keep every one of them except the last, he would not be a Christian. People might think he was, and say he was, and praise him as a very good boy; but God, who looks at the heart, would see that he was only a little Pharisee. I saw a little boy, not long ago, take some money out of his pocket and look at it, and then look around at the various stands upon the side of the street, considering what he would buy. At last he went up to an apple stand

and chose out a beautiful, large, red apple, and having paid for it, went on his way. He had not gone far until I saw him take a large bite out of the apple, and then he made all kinds of faces over it, and with a sorrowful look threw it away! What was the trouble? Ah! the apple looked very well outside, but it was rotten in the heart!

So it is with sinners. However fair an outside they may put on, the heart is corrupt till God changes it.

A gentleman living in Bombay got a tiger when it was quite small, and he petted it and took care of it till it grew up. It used to go about like a dog, and the family were not in the least afraid of it, for they thought that its savage nature was gone. But one day it went into the kitchen, and saw a piece of meat, dripping with blood, lying there. It gave a terrible roar, its eyes glared like two balls of fire, it lashed its sides with its tail, then springing upon the meat, it bounded away with it to the dark forest, and they saw it no more. It had the old savage nature still.

To grow up a really good man or woman there is no other way than to have a good heart. Many a boy who has been brought up respectably has behaved himself as long as he lived at home and was surrounded with restraints; but when he went away where no one knew him, and where there were temptations all around him, he became very wicked. What he needed was a new heart, so that he would always and everywhere hate what was wrong and love what was right.

The first thing toward getting a new heart is to feel that you have a very bad one. You will never pray earnestly for a new heart till you feel that you are a lost sinner. You will say your prayers over and over again, just as a parrot might say over something it had been taught, but that is not prayer in the sight of God. You must see the wickedness of your sins before God, and beg him for Christ's sake to pardon them.

I was reading the other day about a little boy who did so. Freddy was only four years old. One night he was saying his prayers to his mother before

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going to bed. He had said, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and "God bless papa, mama, and"—. Here he stopped, and said :

"Mother, mother, what shall I say if I have been a bad boy?"

"You should not stop to ask questions, my son, while you are saying your prayers," said his mother.

"But, mother, I've been bad. What shall I say?"

"Ask God to forgive you; but you should say your prayers all through when you begin, without stopping."

Freddy then reverently folded his hands, and closing his eyes, said, "And will God forgive me for killing a hop-toad with a big stick, and throwing it down a big hole? Amen."

It is well for us to remember our particular sins in this way and confess them to God. Some people will confess that they are sinners, but when you remind them of some of their sins, they will deny them or make excuses for them. David says, "I acknowledge my sins before thee, and mine iniquities have I not hid."

A little boy only four years old went to his father one Sabbath afternoon, and with tears in his eyes said. "Papa, I feel bad."

"What is the matter, Frankie?" said his Father.

"I have been a naughty boy. My mama told me not to play on the holy Sabbath-day, for it is God's day, and he does not like children to play then. I did play, papa, and now I feel bad, because I hurt God's feelings."

"But how do you know that you have hurt God's feelings?" said his father.

"Because," said the little boy, "my conscience bites my little heart."

I have also read about another little child who seemed restless and unhappy after being put to bed, and the lady who was taking care of him said, "What troubles you, my dear?"

"Oh," said he, "the Bible says the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but dear Jesus had not where to lay his head, and I have such a nice comfortable bed; and yet I am often naughty! Oh! will God forgive me?"

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You see then, that all these little children felt that they needed a new heart. None can give a new heart but God, and you ought to go to him at once.

A minister once addressing children, asked them if they had a watch, and it got broken, where would they take it to get mended. Would they take it to a blacksmith? No. To a carpenter? No. To a farmer? No. Where, then? Why, to a watch-maker, who knows all about it. So we need not go with our bad hearts to a priest or to a minister, nor to any man; but let us go to God, who made us, and who knows all about us, and he can give us a clean heart.

In a family there were two boys. One was named Harry, and the other Fred. Harry was a good boy, and every one who knew him expected that he would grow up a holy and a useful man. Fred was very wild and wicked, often disobeyed his father, and did things that grieved all his friends. One day he had been very naughty, and had been sent to his room. His father would neither see him nor speak to him, and Harry, sorry to see him in

such disgrace, went into his room. Tears of pity were in his eyes as he said to his brother —

“Oh, Fred, Fred! why will you be so very foolish?”

Fred stared at him with a sullen look upon his face, and said, “I do n’t care!”

Harry talked kindly to him, however, and after a while Fred said, “It is of no use;—father will never forgive me.”

“Ask him,” said Harry.

“No,” said Fred, in a sad, hopeless tone. “I *am* sorry, but I could not find words to say so to father; and besides, I do not think he would forgive me now, whatever I might say.”

“Well, then, let me ask him,” said Harry.

“Ha! if you would! Father will listen to you!” he exclaimed.

So the two boys went together to their father’s room, Harry stepping in first, boldly and happily.

Fred was afraid and hung back. “I dare not go in,” said he, as the door was opened.

“Oh, come along!” said his brother, in an encouraging tone of voice; and stepping up to his—

father he said, "Father, I am come to tell you that Fred is very sorry for what he has done, and ask you to forgive him."

The father looked up and said. "Could you not have come yourself, Fred?"

"Oh no," said Harry; "he was so sorry and ashamed that he could not—he dared not, and I persuaded him to let me ask you to forgive him for my sake."

Then the father opened his loving arms, and the guilty boy fell sobbing upon his breast.

"Now, for your brother's sake, I have forgiven you. For your brother's sake be a good boy in time to come."

Dear children,—Jesus is called our "elder brother," you know; and if we go to Him in sincerity he will go with us and intercede for us, as this boy did for his brother. Jesus is called the "Intercessor," which means that when we do wrong he pleads with his Father for us.

A Sabbath-school teacher was once speaking to his class on the text, "He ever liveth to make in-

tercession for us." He asked, not expecting he would get an answer, "What is intercession?" A bright-eyed little fellow, about six years old, replied, "Speaking a word to God for us." Yes, children, that is just it. If you feel that you have a wicked heart, and want to get a new one, go to God and ask for Jesus' sake, and Jesus will plead for you, so that all your sins may be blotted out.

The Rev. Leigh Richmond said to his little boy, "My son, remember you must die, and you may die soon—very soon. If you are to die a boy, we must look for a boy's religion, a boy's knowledge, a boy's faith, a boy's Saviour, a boy's salvation, or else a boy's ignorance, a boy's obstinacy, a boy's unbelief, a boy's idolatry, a boy's destruction. Remember all this, and beware of sin, dread the sinfulness of an unchanged heart, pray for a new one, pray for grace and pardon, and for a soul conformed to the image of Jesus Christ." This was very good counsel, and I want you to think of it, as if it had been spoken to yourself.

A good pastor says: "One of our lambs has been

gathered into the fold of the great Shepherd. Some months since the Spirit of God touched her heart, and taught her that she was a lost sinner. She came to talk with me alone about the salvation of her soul. She wanted peace of mind, deliverance from sin, and a friend to stand by her forever.

“ ‘Emma, have you learned that you are a sinner?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, sir; I feel it more and more every day.’ ”

“ ‘Have you asked for mercy yourself?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, sir, every day.’ ”

“ ‘How long have you been in the habit of daily prayer?’ ”

“ ‘I have always *said* my prayers,’ said Emma, ‘but I do not think that I have really prayed until about two months ago.’ ”

Her kind pastor, Dr. Todd, set before her the plan of salvation—the way by which Jesus paid the price for us with his own blood. She found Jesus as her Saviour by simply trusting in him, and thus got a new heart. She then wanted to do all that Jesus commanded her, and so she united with

the church. At that time she was in good health, but the pastor says: "In a few months, on my return home, I heard that Emma was very sick. I hastened to her bedside, and found her very dangerously sick. The frail body seemed to thrill with pain, and the waves rolled deep over her; but her spirit, like some white marble on which the finger of God had been writing, came out clear and distinct, and showed the writing between the rolling waves. Her mind was clear and bright as a summer morning, and her voice like a silver bell, as she called her friends around her dying bed, and calmly bade each one farewell, sending a particular message to every little schoolmate and friend who was absent, and exhorting her loved ones to come to her Saviour, assuring them that it was easy.

"When asked by her pastor what he should pray for, she replied, that Christ would take her to himself! She spoke of going home, and being almost home, and upon her beautiful brow and meek face peace and hope poured their oil of gladness. You could almost hear the wings of the angel which came

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for his charge. Death had no sting — the grave no victory! Not a cloud hung over her — not the shadow of a doubt disturbed her. I have seen strong men die, and aged Christians go home, but never before saw a child die a hundred years old! I have heard the great ocean lift up his voice and speak of God, and I have heard His power proclaimed in the thunders as they rolled among the mighty Alps, but I never heard His praises so perfected out of the mouth of the babe."

You see, then, my dear young friends, that children can be converted very young. And converted children are happy children. Some think that if they become religious they will be gloomy and sad, and that all the fun and play of their youth will be taken away. This is all nonsense. Religion makes one cheerful and happy; — it is only superstition that is gloomy. God wishes you to play as much as you pray, in the proper time and place — yes, and to laugh, too. There is no harm in laughing, unless you are laughing at sin. See how playful and happy that little kitten is! It jumps and skips, and

rolls over and over, and runs round and round after its own tail, and is just as full of fun as its little skin can hold. How much nicer it is to look at than that gloomy owl, sitting in the ivy bush, blinking! That is like the religion of superstition, which thinks that God is pleased with long faces, and gloomy looks, and long-drawn sighs. The converted child can play, and laugh, and be happy. The God of love is with him — the blessed Saviour loves him — the holy angels are guarding him, and why should he not be happy?



XI.

THE POWER OF HABIT.

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thes. v ; 22.



MY Dear Young Friends,—I want to speak to you very earnestly and solemnly about the forming of bad habits; for on this will greatly depend what you are to be when you grow up to be men and women—yea, even what you will be when millions of ages have rolled away in eternity. What we do constantly and regularly every day gets to be a habit, so that we can scarcely stop doing it, and often do it without knowing it. I saw a man lately who swore almost every sentence he spoke; and when I spoke to him about it, he said it had got to be such a habit

that he spoke those awful words often without knowing it. When he was a little boy he played with bad boys, who spoke such words, and the habit kept growing upon him, till now he will very likely lose his soul by it.

I was once taken through a large prison, where there were six or seven thousand prisoners confined. The prison was not yet finished, and the prisoners were at work on the unfinished part. They were thus at work every day, building up their own prison. There were the masons busily building up the great walls which were to shut them in, and there were the blacksmiths forging the iron bars and bolts that were to shut them out from liberty! Ah! how like this is to little boys and girls forming bad habits, which will bind them like great chains. It may seem but a little thing at first, but it keeps growing and growing, till you struggle in vain to break it. You have bound yourselves hand and foot. Thus sinners forge their own chains, and even dig their own hell!

Sometimes young people get into the habit of

being proud of their dress and of their personal appearance. They can think of nothing but what they are going to wear, or what they do wear, and they judge every one they see by their dress. They delight to stand before the glass, and gaze upon and admire themselves. If any of my young readers are getting into this habit, give it up at once. If you do not you will grow up a poor, silly, useless, vain, empty-headed creature, thinking yourself the admiration of all, while every sensible person will pity and despise you. I read the other day a little fable, which I will here give for your instruction.

A little boy and girl were sitting upon a flowery bank, talking proudly about their dress.

"See," said the boy, "what a beautiful new hat I have got, what a fine blue jacket and trowsers, and what a nice pair of shoes! It is not every one who is dressed as finely as I am!"

"Indeed, sir," said the little girl, "I think I am dressed finer than you, for I have on a silk hat and pelisse, and a new feather in my hat. I know that my dress cost a great deal of money."

"Not so much as mine, I know," said the little boy.

"Hold your peace!" said a caterpillar, crawling near the hedge: "you have neither of you any reason to be so proud of your clothes, for they are only second-hand, and have all been worn by some creature or other, of which you think but meanly, before they were put upon you. Why, that silk hat first wrapped up such a worm as I am."

"There, miss! what do you say to that?" said the little boy.

"And the feather," exclaimed a little bird perched upon a tree, "was stolen from or cast off by one of my race."

"What do you think of that, miss?" the boy repeated. "Well, my clothes were worn neither by birds nor worms!"

"True," said a sheep grazing close by, "but they were worn on the back of some member of my family before they were yours; and as for your hat, I know that the beavers furnished the fur for that article; and my friends, the calves and oxen in that field,

were killed, not merely for their flesh, to eat, but also to get skins to make shoes for you."

Now I hope that little boy and girl, who at Sabbath-school and church cannot hear what is being said to them, on account of thinking of their own dress and looking at the dress of others, will think of the great folly of such conduct, and how bad it must look in the holy presence of God.

Another bad habit of some people, both young and old, is that of not speaking the exact truth. They do not mean at first to tell direct falsehoods, but they get into the habit of speaking of things different from what they are, and it grows upon them, until you can scarcely depend upon a word they say. At first it is only making things seem better or worse than they are. If they are a little cold, they say they are frozen; if a little hungry, they are starving; if a few drops of rain have fallen upon them, they are wet to the skin; if a little fatigued, they are tired to death. This foolish habit grows upon them, till they can tell absolute falsehoods without their consciences troubling them at all; and

you know that God says that those who do not speak the truth can never enter heaven.

An eminent lawyer tells the following story about himself:

“On my entering college I promised my mother, whom I loved as I have never loved another mortal, that while there I would not taste of intoxicating liquor, nor play at cards or other games of chance, nor borrow money, and I never did, and never have since. She did not ask me to promise not to swear; she would not wrong me by the thought that I *could* swear, and she was right—I could not. How can any one insult the Holy, the All-Excellent, our Father and Friend! Nor did she ask me not to lie: she thought I *could* not *lie*, and I also thought I could not. I despised lying as weakness, cowardice, meanness—the very concentration of baseness! I felt strong enough and manly enough to accomplish my end without it.

“During my second college year there was a great deal of card-playing among the students. The Faculty tried to prevent it, but found it difficult.

Though I never played, my chum did, and sometimes others played with him in our room when I was present. I often saw the students at cards. One of the professors questioned me on the subject.

“‘Have you ever seen any card-playing among the students?’

“‘No, sir,’ I answered firmly, determined not to expose my fellows.

“‘A lie of honor!’ I said to myself. What coupling of contradictions! As well talk of ‘honest theft’ — ‘innocent sin!’

“‘You are ignorant of any card-playing in the college building, Brown?’

“‘Yes sir.’

“‘We can always believe *you*, Brown.’

“I was ready to sink. Nothing else could have smitten, stung me, but that. Such confidence, and I so unworthy of it! Still I held back the truth.

“But I left the professor’s room another person than I entered it — guilty, humbled, and wretched! That one false word had spoiled everything for me. My ease of mind had left me — my self-respect was

gone. I felt uncertain — unsafe. I stood upon a lie — trembling — tottering! How soon might I not fail! I was right in feeling unsafe; — it is always unsafe to lie. My feet were sliding beneath me!

“One of the students had lost a quarter’s allowance in play, and applied to his father for a fresh remittance, stating his loss. His father had made complaint to the Faculty, and there was an investigation of the facts. The money had been staked and lost in my room, and I was present!

“‘Was Brown there?’ asked the professor.

“‘He was.’

“The professor’s keen eyes rested on me. Where was my honor *then*? — where my manliness? — where the trust reposed in me? Did any say, ‘We can believe *you*, Brown,’ after that? Did any excuse my lie — any talk of my honor then? Not one. They said, ‘We did n’t think it of *you*, Brown!’ ‘I did n’t suppose Brown would lie to save his right hand!’

“It was enough to kill me. But there was no help: I had to bear my sin and shame as best I

might, and try to outlive it. No one trusted me as before — no one could, for who knew whether my integrity might not again fail? I could not trust myself until I had obtained strength, as well as pardon, from God, nor even then until I had many times been tried and tempted, and had found His strength sufficient."

Learn from this story to speak the honest truth on all occasions. This will turn out the best in the end. It will give all around you confidence in your word, and it will be well-pleasing to the God of truth. Satan is the father of lies, and you would not, I hope, wish to be found doing his vile work — to be his slave.

Some boys acquire the vile and unhealthy habit of using tobacco, and the habit for it becomes so strong that they have to go on using it all their lives. At first it makes them sick, and fills them with loathing; but by continuing to use it the habit is formed so they cannot do without it. This is also the result of bad company. They go with boys who smoke and chew tobacco, and they wish

to imitate them; and sometimes boys get the silly notion into their heads that it makes them men to smoke.

A gentleman once said to a half-grown boy, "Here, boy! will you hold my horse for a few minutes?"

At this the little fellow drew himself up—"Don't call me *boy*," said he: "I have been smoking for the last two years!"

Boys, cast from you with a noble scorn, such foolish notions, and resolve that you will never pollute your lips with this filthy and injurious weed.

The appetite for intoxicating drinks also becomes a body - and - soul - destroying habit. Like tobacco, nature at first loathes it. No one is born a drunkard. When a boy drinks his first glass he dislikes it, and makes all kinds of ugly faces over it; but by continuing to use it again and again, the appetite for it gets formed and strengthened, till he must have it at all hazards.

There was a man who had formed this terrible appetite till he became a poor, miserable drunkard.

Ragged, staggering, with red eyes and blaspheming tongue, he was often seen upon the streets, the very dogs barking after him as if in scorn. One day, when he was sober, a gentleman took him aside and talked kindly to him; he told him of the misery, both here and hereafter, that he was bringing upon himself by drinking, and earnestly urged him to give it up. The poor man wept bitterly, and acknowledged the truth of what the gentleman had said, but replied, "It is no use; I have now got each a love for the liquor that I cannot give it up. When the craving for it is upon me, if a bottle of liquor were on the one side of me, and the flames of hell on the other, and I were sure I would be driven into perdition if I drank the liquor, I would drink it and take the consequences!"

When I was at school one of my dearest companions was Willie D ——. He was a bright and affectionate little boy, and I loved him dearly. We were almost constantly together, our homes being near to each other, and my parents approved of our intimacy. We studied the same books, engaged in the

same amusements, and formed together the same plans for our future lives.

We left our homes together, being sent by our parents to a large city, to continue our studies. There again we were almost inseparable: we roomed together and recited in the same classes. One night we attended together a temperance meeting. At the close of the address I went forward and signed the pledge. I urged him to go forward with me, but he refused; and when I continued to urge him, for the first time in his life he spoke rudely to me.

"I am not going to make a fool of myself, if you choose to do so. I do not need to sign a pledge, — I can take care of myself," were the words he uttered. We went home, for the first time a little coldness between us.

A few weeks after this Willie came in rather late, a good deal flushed and excited, and I thought I detected the smell of liquor upon his breath. He had gone with some young students to pay his first visit to the theatre, and afterwards they urged him to go into a saloon, where he drank his first glass of

intoxicating liquor! The next morning I again urged him to sign the "temperance pledge" but he still said, with a good deal of warmth, that he could take care of himself. But alas! from that time his progress was downward. He was out late nearly every night. He had a brilliant intellect, stood at the head of all his classes, and in our debating societies put forth a splendor of eloquence that was truly thrilling; but now his studies were neglected, and he began to lose his standing in his class. Rapidly he sunk, lower and lower, till, in spite of all the warnings of his friends, he was frequently intoxicated. He gave up his studies, was turned away from his boarding-house, and for a year I nearly lost sight of him. Meantime his conduct was fast becoming worse and worse. It had already brought his mother's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and thus his best earthly friend was gone.

One day, in going down a street of the city, I saw a crowd, and heard a great noise in the distance. Upon drawing nearer I saw that it was a poor

drunkard that was being taken off to prison by two policemen. He was a sad sight to behold. His clothes were in rags, and covered with the mud of the streets, in which he had been rolling. One eye was blackened and swollen, as if from a blow, while the other was red and inflamed. His hat was gone, and his hair was matted. He was struggling wildly with the police officers, uttering the most frantic yells and the most horrid oaths I ever heard. What was my horror to find that this poor wretch was my old friend, Willie!

Another year had gone, and I had seen nothing of him. Meantime I had begun to do the work of a city missionary; and one night, after a hard day's work, was sent for to visit a dying man. I followed the messenger to one of the lowest parts of the city — the resort of drunkards, and thieves, and beggars, and the most abandoned class of the population; and in the garret of an old house I found Willie, lying upon a pallet of straw upon the floor.

He knew me, and exclaimed, "Oh, Robert, I am dying! Pray for me!" I knelt down, and if ever I

intoxicating liquor! The next morning I again urged him to sign the "temperance pledge" but he still said, with a good deal of warmth, that he could take care of himself. But alas! from that time his progress was downward. He was out late nearly every night. He had a brilliant intellect, stood at the head of all his classes, and in our debating societies put forth a splendor of eloquence that was truly thrilling; but now his studies were neglected, and he began to lose his standing in his class. Rapidly he sunk, lower and lower, till, in spite of all the warnings of his friends, he was frequently intoxicated. He gave up his studies, was turned away from his boarding-house, and for a year I nearly lost sight of him. Meantime his conduct was fast becoming worse and worse. It had already brought his mother's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and thus his best earthly friend was gone.

One day, in going down a street of the city, I saw a crowd, and heard a great noise in the distance. Upon drawing nearer I saw that it was a poor

drunkard that was being taken off to prison by two policemen. He was a sad sight to behold. His clothes were in rags, and covered with the mud of the streets, in which he had been rolling. One eye was blackened and swollen, as if from a blow, while the other was red and inflamed. His hat was gone, and his hair was matted. He was struggling wildly with the police officers, uttering the most frantic yells and the most horrid oaths I ever heard. What was my horror to find that this poor wretch was my old friend, Willie!

Another year had gone, and I had seen nothing of him. Meantime I had begun to do the work of a city missionary; and one night, after a hard day's work, was sent for to visit a dying man. I followed the messenger to one of the lowest parts of the city — the resort of drunkards, and thieves, and beggars, and the most abandoned class of the population; and in the garret of an old house I found Willie, lying upon a pallet of straw upon the floor.

He knew me, and exclaimed, "Oh, Robert, I am dying! Pray for me!" I knelt down, and if ever I

prayed in my life it was then. The guilty, trembling soul of my old companion was on the very threshold of eternity, and who could help praying under such circumstances? Scarcely had we risen from our knees when he was seized with a fit of that terrible disease which drunkenness brings on. With a fearful cry he bounded from his bed, exclaiming that thousands of demons were after him! Then he thought that great slimy serpents were coiling themselves around him, and he made desperate efforts to keep them from strangling him in their tightening folds. His eyes rolled in agony, and big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow. At last he became a little more calm, but in a short time breathed his last.

My dear young friends, this is a true story. I have kept back names and places, for Willie has some very respectable friends yet living, whose feelings I would not like to hurt. Oh, take warning from his case, and resolve that you will never taste intoxicating drinks. If you never drink, you never can become a drunkard; but if you drink ever so

little at first, you may fall, as thousands have done before you.

Prevention is better than cure. If you saw a man about to fall and hurt himself, and you could prevent his falling, it would be better than if you cured him of his injuries after he had fallen. If you could prevent a friend from having a fever, it would be better than curing him after he had it. So, many are restored after they become drunkards, but all their lives long they bear the marks upon them of the dreadful experience they have gone through. I want you never to know the evil at all, by never touching the drunkard-making drink.

I might speak to you of the importance of cultivating GOOD HABITS—such as being punctual to time in all your engagements, and faithful to all your promises; also, the habit of prayer, and of reading your Bible every day. Get the habit, also, of going to the house of God regularly on the Sabbath, and of giving a steady attention to what is said on those important occasions. It is told of our blessed Saviour that he went on the Sabbath-day

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into the house of God, "as his custom was." It is a good and holy custom, and I pray you, dear children, never to give it up.

There are some young people who are in the habit of praying night and morning, and have done so as long as they can remember; but when they go away from home they give it up, because they are ashamed to be seen praying by others! What! — ashamed of what is right! — ashamed of the blessed Jesus! Never be so mean as that. Resolve firmly that you will *always* do right, no matter who is present, and God will surely bless you all your days, and make you a blessing; for He says, "Them that honor me I will honor."



XII.

FIRMNESS FOR THE TRUTH.

 HIS, My Dear Children, means, that where we are engaged in anything that is good and right, anything that we know that God is pleased with, we are to stick to it, no matter who opposes us. In past ages, good people were shut up in gloomy prisons, and burned at the stake, because they loved and served the Lord Jesus. John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, was shut up in prison for twelve years for preaching the gospel, and when they offered to let him out if he would stop preaching, his reply was, "If you let me out to-day, I shall be preaching again to-morrow." Many thousands of others were offered their lives

when on the scaffold, if they would deny Jesus, but they said if they had a thousand lives, they would gladly give them up for the blessed Saviour.

Now in this day we are not called to suffer in this way for our religion, but we still require to be firm for the truth, or we perish. Jesus says, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Many a boy who was beginning to follow Jesus, has been laughed and sneered out of his soul. They had serious impressions, felt the evil of sin, were almost persuaded to go to Christ, but the fear of being laughed at, turned them away. How awful when they come to meet at Judgment, those whom they allowed to ruin their souls.

Others let the sinful pleasures of the world lead them from seeking the salvation of their souls. But these pleasures are very short-lived and vain, and will give nothing but pain to reflect upon when they come to die; then nothing but the religion of Jesus will cheer and comfort the soul.

Others again are led away by false views of Bible truth, such as that there will be no punishment of

the wicked after death. But Jesus, who came from eternity and knew all about it, says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." A man had his little grand - child upon his knee, as he was saying to another person that there was no hell; when the little one said to him, "Ah, but Grandpa you have not been dead yet!" a good hint that after he died he would have to change his mind on that subject.

In all the temptations of life, take the Bible as a light sent from heaven to guide your feet in the path of safety and peace. Take Christ as the only one who can lead you to pardon and heaven. Anything that would lead you away from these, must be your worst enemy. All good on earth springs from these. All the good people that have ever lived, or that now live, have and do love the Bible and the Saviour it reveals. All that oppose these are vile and abominable, and to be shunned on the peril of your soul. When men or boys give themselves up to sin, they hate the Bible and all good. This is seen in the following fact related by the great preacher, Mr. Spurgeon :

A minister of the Presbyterian Church, preached a series of discourses in a town in Louisiana. A few days after, he took passage on a steamer on the Mississippi, when a leader of a band of infidels came near where he was sitting, and began to pour out his horrid blasphemies against religion. Many were gathered around. At last, slapping the minister on the shoulder, he said, "Old fellow what do you think of these things?" He calmly pointed out of doors, and said, "Do you see that beautiful landscape spread out in such loveliness before you?" "Yes," the infidel replied. "Well, if you were to send out a dove he would pass over that scene and see in it all that was beautiful and lovely, and delight himself in gazing at and admiring it; but if you were to send out a buzzard over precisely the same scene, he would see in it nothing to fix his attention, unless he could find some rotten carcass that would be loathsome to all other animals, in which case he would delight and gloat upon it with pleasure.'

"Do you mean to compare me to a buzzard, sir?" said the infidel, coloring deeply.

"I made no allusion to you, sir," said the minister, very quietly. The infidel walked off in great confusion.

What beautiful examples we have of firmness in the right in the Bible. When Daniel was threatened with death in an awful form if he would not stop praying to the God of heaven, he continued to do so, not fearing the wrath of the king. So with the three Hebrews when threatened with being cast into the flaming fiery furnace.

Here is a praying boy away from home. There is to sleep with him a wicked boy who sneers at religion. There is a struggle in that youth's mind, whether he will go prayerless to bed to avoid being laughed at, or show the true courage of a Christian by doing what is right. At length he resolves to do right, and by so doing leads his companion to Christ. How happy he feels in doing right, compared to what he would if he had shown himself a sneaking coward in the hour of trial.

We like to see a person who is firm and prompt, and decided in the things of this life. There are some people whom you never know where to find. They are everything by turns and nothing long. They resolve, and re-resolve, but remain the same. If you have an engagement to meet them, they are never on time. They are full of excuses; but miserably deficient in performances. They form a habit of indecision and procrastination that ruins them for both worlds. The evil of indecision is seen in the following illustration :

During a violent storm, a trading vessel was driven upon a high rock on the western coast of England, and immediately became a total wreck. Many of the crew perished, but the captain and his wife were providentially enabled to reach this rock, and clambering up it, to escape from the waves. But all danger was not over. Their place of shelter was a crag, separated from the mainland by a deep channel, where the sea rushed with terrific violence between the ragged cliffs on either side. The cold was intense, and they had neither covering nor shel-

ter. The tide was rising rapidly, and night was drawing on. It was plain that unless prompt assistance was rendered, they could not hope to survive. Happily they were descried from the neighboring shore, and a boat was immediately launched to attempt their deliverance.

For the boat to approach the rock was found utterly impossible, and the only alternative was to project a rope towards them from the shore by means of a rocket, and then to haul them through the surf within reach of the boat. After many fruitless trials, the attempt to throw the rope was successful. The captain grasped the rope, by means of which a second was speedily sent on, and one was made fast to each person. The mountain waves with every successive flow surged up to their very feet, but receding, laid bare the broken and pointed rocks which were spread below. It was clear that their only way of deliverance was by springing into the wave at the moment of its highest swell, and thus being borne over the danger, while the boat's crew were on the alert, promptly to pull them on board.

The wife is first to make the attempt, and is instructed what to do. All is ready! The big wave swells full at her feet, "Now, *Now!*" shouted the crew. "Spring into the wave," urged the captain, with passionate energy. Alas! She trembles, hesitates, delays — only a moment; *but that moment is fatal*. She leaps toward the receding wave, falls upon the ragged rocks beneath, and the next moment is taken on board the boat a mangled and lifeless corpse! The captain ignorant of her hapless fate, follows her, takes the wave at the swell, and is saved.

Human life is not frequently endangered by a crisis so urgent as this, nor does the case often occur in which instant decision is thus necessary for its preservation. But the guilty soul is ever in danger, and the hour even now passing will doubtless exert an influence unspeakably important upon the eternal destiny of many.

I have heard of a man who had lived to an advanced age, careless about the salvation of his soul. He gave himself up wholly to the world and its pur-

suits, and neglected the Bible and the house of God. One day he lost a bank note in his barn, and after seeking for it several times, failed to discover it. At last he said with great determination in his tone, "I know that that note is in the barn, and *I will search for it till I find it!*" He accordingly went to work, moving object after object, and searching hour after hour, till at last he found it.

Some time after, he became distressed in view of his sins. His wife was a pious woman, and one day he said to her, "What must one do to become a Christian?" She replied, "You must seek for the truth, as you sought for the bank note." He did from that moment begin to seek for it with a fixed purpose of heart, and soon found a free salvation in Jesus Christ, and was rejoicing in possession of "the pearl of great price."

Sinners often tell us that they wish they could be Christians; that they are anxious to be saved; and yet year after year will roll on and find them in the same unsatisfactory state. This is because they are not in downright earnest. They may have some

vague, general desires to be saved, and may cherish some sentimental emotions towards religion, but have never yet been as really anxious to know how salvation is to be secured, and to obtain it, as men are to make money, or as the politician is to get votes on the day of election. If they had been, they would have found the truth, and believed in Christ long ago.

"I am a lost man," said an awakened sinner. "I am glad to hear it," said a lady present. "What!" said he, "glad to hear that I am lost?" "Yes," she replied, "for Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost." "Oh, thank God for that word!" he exclaimed, as the truth in its full-orbed glory, broke upon his mind. This is just it, Jesus Christ is seeking the sinner to save him, and if the sinner is really in earnest seeking the Saviour, what is to hinder the glorious meeting taking place? Jesus died for sinners. I am a sinner; therefore he died for me. He shed the blood that cleanseth from all sin; he is the propitiation for the sins of the world — the whole world; I am one of that

world ; therefore his blood, his propitiation avails for me. Stretching forth the hand of faith and grasping these sublime truths, and clinging to them, neither earth nor hell can drive us hence.

But there must be an entire emptying of the heart of all dependence on self, and a simple dependence upon Christ for salvation. A fire is rushing through a house in the darkness of the midnight hour. All is wild consternation, the family seeking safety in flight. But above the roaring of the devouring flames, the shrill voice of a little boy was heard from an upper window, crying, "Father, father, how shall I get out?"

"Here I am, my son," said the father ; "fear not, lay hold of the sill of the window, and drop yourself down, I will certainly catch you."

The poor boy laid hold as desired, but hung trembling, afraid to let go. But the flames began to approach the window, the casement grew burning hot — there was no time to lose — his case was growing desperate.

Again the voice of the father is heard, "Let go,

my son." "I can't see you, father." "But I am here, you must not fear." The poor boy began to think of the faithfulness of his father's word, that he had never deceived him, and his fear and distrust gave place to faith. He trusted his father's word, and was caught in his strong and loving arms. Thus it is that the soul needs simply to let itself drop into the arms of a Saviour's love. Cursed by the law, chased by the terrors of the wrath to come, unable to help himself, or to get help from his fellow men, Christ says, "Look unto me and be ye saved." But instead of looking to Christ, he turns his eye inward upon himself—at his sins, his imperfections—and feels afraid to go to Christ just as he is. He must make himself better, he thinks. Ah! deluded soul, let yourself drop into the arms of Jesus at once. While you pause, time does not pause; while you linger, death lingers not, and while you slumber, damnation slumbereth not.

A gentleman was told that a view of the sun rising, while standing upon a mountain that was pointed out to him, was an object of great interest,

and rose early the next morning and proceeded to the mountains to enjoy it. It fully met all his expectations. At an early day he resolved to repeat the visit. He rose early enough to accomplish his object, but on the way he began to meditate upon the nature of light, and to philosophize upon the way in which the impressions of objects are made upon the eye; and while he did so, he lingered, and the sun was up before he reached the proper standpoint, and he lost the glorious sight. So, alas, it is with thousands in regard to the Son of Righteousness. They turn their eyes upon themselves, they keep analyzing their own feelings, and philosophizing upon the nature of faith, instead of simply *looking to Jesus*. The result is, that they lose many a glorious sight, that others are enjoying, of the precious Saviour, and of the fullness of his grace.



XIII.

THE GREAT DAY

"The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." Rev., 6; 17.

EAR Children: We are very ignorant of the future, and of what may happen to us in an hour, or a day, from the present. But there are two scenes which lie before us in the future, that we know we must go through; that is death and judgment. "It is appointed for all men once to die; and after death, the judgment."

I am going to speak to you of the great judgment day; in the awful scenes of which you and I must bear a part; and I do this not to make you gloomy, but to make you joyful, by being prepared for that day.

It is called the day of God's wrath. This does not mean wrath or angry passion, such as we see among men. God is love. He is good to all, and his tender mercy is over all his works; but when his mercy is trampled upon, and his love despised and insulted, these are strong figures used in the Bible to show the awfulness of his justice, when he shall punish the sinner.

Suppose we are in a court of justice. There stands a man at the bar accused of murder. Witness after witness gives evidence against him, until his guilt stands out clear as day before all, and now the judge is about to pass sentence of death upon him. Not because he hates him, not because he is in a great rage of angry passion, but because justice must be done. He may pity the criminal—the tears may be in his eyes while he condemns him, but the law must be carried out. So a God of love will punish those who reject the great salvation.

But see the effects which the sentence has on the guilty man. His face turns pale as death; his limbs tremble; and overcome by mental agony, he falls

to the earth like a dead man. If such be the effects of mere human justice, who can tell how awful the effects of the sentence of condemnation from the Great God!

Where will the guilty sinner flee in that day? Will he flee to his companions in sin, and pour out the agony of his soul to them? Alas! they are in the same dreadful consternation as himself. Will he flee to the mountains? They have melted away before the face of the Judge. Will he flee to the ocean and seek to bury himself in its briny depths? The ocean is like a boiling caldron! The voice that long said come, now says depart. He would not pray when God was waiting to hear, now he prays, but God will not regard. It will be a day of great events.

Many of the days that have rolled into the past eternity, have been big with great events.

That was a great day when over a forming world, the morning stars sang together, and all sons of God shouted for joy. That was a great day when God determined to destroy the world by flood, when

the flood-gates of heaven were opened, and the foundations of the great deep broken up.

That was a great day when the law was given from Sinai, when God descended upon the mountain top, and it shook to its very foundation, under the tread of the divine footstep; when the trumpet sounded louder and yet louder, and the thunders of heaven seemed like nature's expiring groan. That was a great day when the Saviour was born; when angel choirs sang the coming of Immanuel, and welcomed to earth, God in human form. That was a great day when the Lord of glory died, amid the darkened sun, and the convulsed earth. In the history of nations there are days that are called great; but oh, how great will that day be, when the trumpet shall sound, and its tremendous notes shall echo from pole to pole, shake the globe to its very center, and breaking upon the dull ear of death, startle the dead into instant life! Oh, what a commotion! The heavens are being rolled up like a scroll, and the sun turning into darkness! And what is that which appears in the heavens? It is the Son of

God, coming upon his throne of glory. Pilate shall look up, and see him who once stood before him as a criminal, now coming as his judge. He who once wore a crown of thorns, now wears a crown of glory. That face that was once spit upon, and smitten by sinners, now beams with celestial joy.

At his voice, the millions of the dead come forth from the ocean and from the land. Oh, what a changed world! The sky is not, the moon is not; and the very earth is on fire, and melting with fervent heat.

Where are now the boasted fabrics of strength that men have built; the costly buildings; the splendid edifices and magnificent monuments in which they boasted? The very cloud-topped mountains, the everlasting hills, as they were called, have passed away.

Again it may be called a great day, because of its great discoveries and decisions. Our Lord declared that that which is now done in closets, will be proclaimed upon the house-tops. Think of the discoveries that will then be made! Crimes will then

be revealed, before the open gaze of a world, that were never seen by mortal eye. Hypocrites will then have their thin and miserable garb torn asunder, and their naked deformity held up to view, before a congregated world. Some that were praised for their goodness, will be seen to be but painted sepulchres; while others that had their names cast out as evil, will be owned as God's jewels. Men who denied the being of a God, will now see that there is a God, and a great God too.

Oh, how changed will be the views of infidels in that day! If we are wronged among men, let us take courage, for that day will declare whose side we have been on. Then think of the great decisions of that day. See the millions of the human family, taking their stand before the great throne. There is no distinctions among them now, but such as is made by their characters. There stands the king on the same level with the beggar. There stands the poor negro, and the white tyrant that oppressed him. There stands the bloody Nero, and the devoted Christians whom he burned. There stand the martyrs

of all lands, and the cruel men that imbrued their hands in their blood. There stands Herod and the innocent babes that he butchered. There stands Stephen and the men that stoned him to death. There stands the faithful minister and the people that despised his message of love. There stands the Sabbath School teacher and the class he so earnestly invited to Jesus.

And now the separation is about to be made, the great sentence about to be passed. Every breath is hushed,—every voice is still. God speaks: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." And now comes the eternal separation. Parents from children, teachers from scholars, ministers from people, brothers from sisters, all, eternal farewell!

[We are told, that this day shall come upon the world, sudden and unexpected. People shall be taken by surprise, as when a thief comes in the

night. Men will be engaged about their usual business and pleasures, when the loud piercing blast of the trumpet shall break upon their ears with startling suddenness. The merchant in his store, the farmer in his fields, the student at his books, the gay and careless pleasure-seekers in the ball room, the drivelling drunkard with the profane song in his mouth, shall be summoned to appear before the Judge—to drop the employments of time, and begin those of eternity. From the grassy mounds in our grave-yards, from under the splendid monuments, and from the deep bed of the ocean, the millions of the dead, spring to life, in the twinkling of an eye, and small and great shall stand before God.

The great question now comes, who shall be able to stand? I need not say that the careless sinner will not be able to stand. The very expression *careless sinner* has something awful in it. While God is in such earnestness to save his soul, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for him, he is careless about himself. While the Saviour was in

such earnestness about him, that he hung upon the cross 'till the gloomy shades of death gathered around him, the sinner is careless about himself. While the Holy Spirit is in such earnestness about him, though He constantly strives with him, he still remains careless. While ministers and good people are praying and weeping for his salvation, he is careless about his own soul. Yea, while the spirits of darkness are in earnest seeking his destruction, he cares for none of these things. The word of God asks, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear!"

The hypocrite will not be able to stand; our blessed Saviour when on earth spoke some of his strongest sentences of condemnation against such; and how shall he speak to them when they stand before him in judgment? He compared them to a whited sepulchre—you approach it, and it may be composed of the whitest and most polished marble, and you may read upon it the most flattering epitaph; but look within, and you start back with loathing and horror. So God's eye, that darts through crea-

tion at a glance, looks within, and notwithstanding the fair outward appearance, sees the inward impurity of the heart.

There is a great difference between an egg and an egg shell; but a still greater difference between an empty profession and the real possession of Christ's love.

Those that are on the rock, Christ Jesus, shall be able to stand. David said, that the Lord had taken him out of a horrible pit and the miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock. The waves may roll and dash against the rock, but it stands secure. I have read of a good man who was dying, when some persons around his bed said in a whisper, "He is sinking fast." He opened his eyes and said, "How can I sink through a rock?" He felt that he was resting on the rock, Christ Jesus, securely.

So in the great day, when great billows of fire are rolling across our globe, the Christians will be able to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "It is Christ that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

There was once a fire raging through a dwelling; the lady of the house was seen rushing from room to room trying to save her property. She cast valuable article after article out of the window, until her friends besought her to come down on peril of her life. She gazed for a moment on the heap of things that she had saved, with a smile of satisfaction; but all at once her countenance gathered the darkness of despair, as she exclaimed in wild and frenzied tone, "I have lost my child! I have forgotten my child! Oh! will nobody save him?" and before the neglected babe could be reached, he was burned in the fiery ruin.

So in the great day of judgment, many will be found running about, calling upon the hills to cover them, and the rocks to crush them, and saying, "I have saved money, I have saved property, I have acquired fame, but alas, I have lost my soul!"

XIV.

GLEANINGS FOR THE CHILDREN!

EAR Children: For many years it was my privilege to address large meetings of children about their soul's salvation. This was a work in which I greatly delighted; and I look back now with pleasure upon those happy occasions. But for some years it has pleased God to afflict me, so that I have been cut off from all active employment in his service. But I have not forgotten my young friends; and in the course of my reading, whenever I have met with a little story or anecdote that I thought would please them and do them good, I have preserved it; and now in this chapter, I present a number of them, with the prayer that God

would bless them to your present and eternal welfare.

MABEL AND HER BIBLE LESSON.

"Mother, does the Bible teach wastefulness?" asked Mabel, looking up from her book.

"No, my dear," answered her mother.

"Then what does this mean?" asked Mabel again; "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days?"

Her mother told her that in the country where the Bible was written, there were only two seasons, the dry and the rainy; and that it was in the latter part of the wet season, while the rivers yet overflowed their banks, that the farmers planted their wheat,—that is, cast it on the subsiding waters, which, in their turn, deposited it in the moist earth, and as soon as the sunshiny days come, it springs up, covers the fields with a beautiful green, and brings a plentiful harvest in autumn.

"Then," said Mabel, "it might read, 'Cast thy wheat upon the waters, and thou shalt find bread

after many days.' Yes I think I understand it; but,"—and Mabel stopped.

"But what?" asked her mother.

"Why, I suppose it has *another* meaning," said Mabel, "just as the proverbs have."

"Yes," answered her mother, "there is a general truth wrapped up in this particular saying."

"What is it?" asked Mabel.

"Let *me* tell Mabel," said uncle George, who had put down his book and listened to the conversation:

"Mabel," he said, "fifteen years ago, when I was at the academy at A——, two or three of the students took the stage-coach one vacation, to visit the White Hills, and I am afraid we were rather a hard set. In the coach we found a gentleman, who soon fell into conversation with us, and we continued fellow passengers for nearly two days. He pleasantly entered into our school-boy plans and pleasures, but he was a good man; and in his company, we felt conscious of being in the presence of a superior; and his last words we never forgot. Well, Mabel, before the year was out, we all joined

the church of Christ, and we all dated our serious impressions to the conversation of that stranger in the stage-coach. I accidentally met him again, about three years ago; made his acquaintance, recalled the circumstance to his mind, and told him what an influence he left upon his fellow-travelers many years before."

"And did the others become ministers like you, uncle George?" asked Mabel.

"Not preachers," answered uncle George; "but ministers of good, I hope, in their different spheres. And now Mabel, do you see how that stranger 'cast his bread upon the waters, and found it after many days?'"

"I think I do," said Mabel, her face brightening. "I think I do. We must do our part, and trust God for the fruit."

"Precisely so," said uncle George, "precisely so; if you, Mabel, and I do *our* duty, good *will* spring out of it."

GRACE, AND HER CHANGE OF HEART

"Do ask your mother if we may not go into the woods this afternoon," said Fanny Storer, who was spending a week at the home of Grace Gray. "She'll give us leave I'm sure; but I will run and ask her now, so as to be certain," said Grace, jumping up from the step of the garden-door where they were sitting, and running into the house to find her mother. Presently she came back, and shook her head.

"Oh, why not?" cried Fanny; "we depended upon it; besides, the Johnsons can't go any afternoon but Wednesday. Why won't she let us go?"

"Because the Mother's Society meets here this afternoon, and she wants me to keep the door," answered Grace.

"Then we shall have a good time at home," cried Fanny, brightening up from her disappointment.

"We shall have to keep very still, Fanny," said Grace.

"What is the Mother's Society?" asked Fanny; "I never heard of one before."

"It is the mothers meeting together to pray for their children," answered Grace.

"Can't they pray at home?" asked Fanny.

"Oh, they do," said Grace, "but you know when people are interested in anything how they get together and talk it over; so our mothers meet together to talk how to bring us up in the best way; and they pray because they want God to help them."

It was a new idea to Fanny, and after reflecting a minute, "I think you ought to be very good, Grace," she said.

Grace had often thought so before, but now her pride was a little touched, and she wanted to say, "Well, am I not good?" but she did not say it; and soon after Mrs. Gray sent the little girls down town on an errand.

In the afternoon Grace, with Fanny, was stationed in the sitting-room to go to the door and show the ladies up stairs; it was in the best chamber where

they generally met when they came to Mrs. Gray's. Fanny sometimes went to the door with Grace, and the mothers, as they passed in, dropped many a kind word to the little girls. "I am sure they love us," said Fanny; "I wish my mamma was at the meeting."

The children did not know how to amuse themselves in the sitting-room; they soon got tired of looking out of the window; at last they wished they had a book to read together, and Grace went up stairs to select one. She went to the little room over the stairs where her books were, and as it was next to where the meeting was, she overheard a voice very distinctly; indeed, the door from her little room to the best chamber was ajar, and Grace heard part of a mother's prayer, which went to her heart. "Oh," thought Grace, "she means me with the rest; I know I ought to be good, as Fanny says." Tears came into her eyes, but she hastily brushed them away, found a book, and ran back on tip-toe to the sitting-room. It was a funny book; Grace was sorry, for she did not feel like reading a funny

book just then. Fanny was delighted; but Fanny's laugh did not banish Grace's seriousness.

More than a week passed away; Fanny had gone, and Grace had returned to her studies, when one morning having forgotten her history, she went home after it. It was not down stairs, and Grace thought it must be in her mother's room. Stealing in, in order to take her by surprise, she found no mother there. It was very still; so still that a low noise from a little closet caught the ear of Grace. She hushed and hearkened. It was her mother in prayer, in prayer for *her*, that God would send down his Holy Spirit and make her a penitent and believing child. "Ain't I as good as other children?" was the instant whisper of pride in Grace's heart, as she turned around and crept down stairs. "As good as others, perhaps," said conscience; "but are you truly and honestly good,—good in the sight of God, who sees you just as you are? Don't you do anything to displease Him?" Then quick as thought, Grace remembered how, only the day before, she deceived her teacher by "making believe

study," when she was reading the "Arabian Nights;" how she said her head ached because she did not want to be sent on an errand; how rudely she demanded Joseph's knife, and how angry she was because he said he had not got it; and how often she had neglected her prayers because she did not want to pray. "Oh," said Grace, overwhelmed with the memories that came upon her, correcting her of her sins and short-comings, "I am *not* good; I am bad, very bad. God says that I am a sinner, and do not love him; my mother knows it, and she prays for me." Grace went out of the door crying, and very wretched, and went back to the school-room without her history. The teacher observed something unusual in her, but for the present forebode to ask questions.

Grace did not return in the afternoon, nor for several days, detained perhaps by a heavy storm which set in; but when she did come back her countenance looked like the clear shining after the rain. Grace well knew that she had faults; many of them were secret faults, known only to God, and she was

often unhappy on account of them, but she hated to think long about them, and she put off the subject of religion to some more convenient season.

Some people do so all their lives, and at last die without one penitent tear, or prayer for forgiveness. The Bible says that of all such, that God will cast them off forever.

Grace had done so many times. But now, as she went home from school, and all that afternoon, her sins stared her so in the face that she could not help thinking of them. She felt they had displeased God. She wanted to hide from his searching eye, but she could not. She wanted to pray, but she was afraid to pray. She wanted her mother to pray again for her, but she was ashamed to ask. Grace felt very bad indeed. After supper she went up to the little room next to where the mothers prayed for their children, and she thought that maybe God would hear her for her mother's and all those good mothers' sakes, and the little girl took courage. Then she thought God would hear her "for Christ's sake." The great God had given his dear Son to

be her Saviour, and Jesus Christ loved little children; and would not he hear her prayer for his dear Son's sake? With that she fell down on her knees and cried, "Oh God, pardon me, a poor sinful child, for Christ's sake, who died for me. Take away this naughty heart, and give me a new heart to love and serve thee." I do not know how long she staid in that little chamber, but I do know that God never despises or turns away from the humble, sincere prayer of the smallest child on earth. And from this time Grace's mother believes she became a child of God's, for she was humble, dutiful, and watchful over herself, prayerful and happy too.

God sent his Holy Spirit down into the heart of this little girl to *convince* her of sin and to bring her to himself. God has sent and will send his Holy Spirit upon thousands who read this story, for the same great purpose. Will you not yield to his Spirit, and seek forgiveness and peace through his gracious Son, Jesus Christ? Now is the only time you are sure of; to-morrow may be too late.

GREAT LOVE,

Some years ago, a Roman nobleman was traveling on special business in the interior of Russia. It was the beginning of winter, but the frost had set in early. His carriage rolled up to an inn, and he demanded a relay of horses to carry him on to the next station, where he intended to spend the night. The innkeeper entreated him not to proceed ; for he said there was danger in traveling so late ; the wolves were out. But the nobleman thought the man wanted merely to keep him as a guest ; he said it was too early for wolves, and ordered the horses to be put to. He then drove off, with his wife and his only daughter inside the carriage with him.

On the box of the carriage was a serf, who had been born on the nobleman's estate, to whom he was much attached, and who loved his master as he loved his own life. They rolled over the hardened snow, and there seemed no sign of danger. The moon shed her pale light, and brought out into burnished silver the road on which they were going.

At length the little girl said to her father, "What was that strange howling sound that I just heard?" "Oh, nothing but the wind sighing through the forest trees," said her father. The child shut her eyes and was quiet. But soon she said again, "Listen, father; it is not like the wind, I think."

The father listened; and far, far away, in the distance behind him, through the clear, cold, frosty air, he heard a noise which he too well knew the meaning of. He then put down the window and spoke to his servant. "The wolves, I fear, are after us; make haste. Tell the man to drive faster, and get your pistols ready." The postilion drove faster, but the same mournful sound which the child had heard approached nearer and nearer. It was quite clear that a pack of wolves had scented them out. The nobleman tried to calm the anxious fears of his wife and child.

At last the baying of the pack was distinctly heard. So he said to his servant, "When they come up with us, do you single out one, and fire, and I will single out another; and while the rest

are devouring them, we shall get on." As soon as he put down the window, he saw the pack in full cry behind, the large dog-wolf at their head. Two shots were fired and two of the wolves fell. The others instantly set upon them and devoured them; and meanwhile the carriage gained ground.

But the taste of blood made them more furious, and they were soon up with the carriage again. Again two shots were fired; and two more wolves fell and were again devoured. But the carriage was speedily overtaken, and the post-house was yet far distant.

At length the servant said to his master, "I have served you ever since I was a child; I love you as I love my own self. Nothing now can save you but *one* thing. Let *me* save you, I ask you only to look after my wife and my little ones." The nobleman remonstrated, but in vain. When the wolves next came up, the faithful servant threw himself amongst them. The two panting horses galloped on with the carriage, and the gates of the post-house just closed in upon it as the fearful pack were on the

point of making the last and fatal attack. But the travelers were safe.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But God commendeth *his* love toward us in that *while we are yet sinners*, Christ died for us."

RAGGED TOM, THE SURETY.

One Sabbath afternoon, a big boy stood at the door of a Sabbath School. He was so bad that he had been turned out of school the Sabbath before. His father and mother had brought him, and begged that he might be received again. The superintendent said, "We should be glad to do him good, but we are afraid he will ruin all the other children. It is very bad for a school where a big boy sets a wicked example."

"We know he is a very bad boy at school, sir," said the parents, "but he is ten times worse at home; he will be lost if you do not take him back."

"We could take him back if we could secure his good behavior. I will see," thought the superin-

tendent. So he stepped back into the school and rang his bell for silence. All listened, while he said, "That boy wants to come into the school again; but we cannot take him back without making sure of his good behavior. Will anyone be surety for him?" A pause followed. The elder boys shook their heads. They said they knew him too well. The others did not care for him. But one little boy pitied the big bad boy, and was sorry that no one would be surety. The little boy went by the name of "Ragged Tom." It was not his fault that he was ragged, for his mother was very poor. The superintendent soon heard his little voice, saying, "If you please, sir, I will, sir." "*You*, Tom! a little boy like you! Do you know what it means to be a surety, Tom?"

"Yes, sir, if you please; it means that when he is a bad boy again, I'm to be punished for it."

"And are you willing to be punished for that big boy?"

"Yes, sir, if he's bad again."

"Then come in," said the superintendent, looking

to the door, and the big boy, with a downcast face, walked across the floor. He was thinking as he walked, "I know I'm a bad boy, but I'm not as bad as that. I'll never let that little fellow be punished for me—never!" I think God had put that thought into the big boy's mind. He was graciously helping Tom's work as the surety.

As the children were leaving school, the superintendent saw this big boy and little Tom walking and talking together. He said to himself, "I am afraid that boy will do Tom harm. I must go and look after them."

When he reached the cottage where Tom lived, he said to the mother, "Where is your son Tom?"

"Oh, he's just gone up stairs with a great boy that he brought in with him. I don't know what they are doing."

"May I go up?"

"Oh yes, sir."

The superintendent went slowly and gently up the stairs, and as he reached the top he could see through the door that Tom and the big boy were

kneeling together. He soon heard Tom's voice, saying, "O Lord, make this boy who has been the worst boy in the school, O Lord, make him the best boy."

The superintendent knelt down by Tom's side, and they all prayed together.

God heard them and made the big bad boy to become one of the best boys in the school. And he raised up friends for "Ragged Tom," who put him to school, and after that sent him to college, so that he was able to go as a missionary to the heathen.

SIMPLICITY OF FAITH.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother, of one who had not; her mother was dead.

"Mother told me who to go to before she died," answered the little orphan; "I go to the Lord Jesus; he was my mother's friend, and he's mine."

"Jesus Christ is up in the sky; he is a long way off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely he can stop to mind you."

"I do not know anything about that," said the

orphan ; " all I know, *he says he will, and that's enough for me.*"

" THAT'S ME ! "

Mr. Spurgeon relates the following anecdote :

Sitting down in the Orphanage grounds upon one of the seats, we were talking with one of our brother trustees, when a little fellow, we should think about eight years of age, left the other boys who were playing around us, and came deliberately up to us. He opened fire upon us thus :

" Please, Mister Spurgeon, I want to come and sit down on that seat between you and that gentleman."

" Come along, Bob, and tell us what you want."

" Please, Mr. Spurgeon, suppose there was a little boy who had no father, who lived in an Orphanage with a lot of other little boys who had no fathers, and suppose those little boys had mothers and aunts who came once a month, and brought them apples and oranges, and gave them pennies, and suppose this little boy had no mother and no aunt, and so nobody never came to bring him nice things,

—don't you think somebody ought to give him a penny? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, that's me."

Somebody felt something rise in his eyes, and Bob got a sixpence, and went off in a great state of delight. Poor little soul, he had seized the opportunity to pour out a bitterness which had rankled in his little heart, and made him miserable when the monthly visiting day came around, and, as he said, "Nobody never came to bring him nice things." Turning the tables, we think some grown up persons, who were once Bobs and Harrys, might say: "Suppose there was a poor sinner who deserved to be sent to hell, but was forgiven all his sins by sovereign grace, and made a child of God, don't you think he ought to help on the Saviour's cause? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, that's me.'"

MAMMA'S WATCH.

"Please, mamma, let me take your watch. Oh! what makes it tick so fast?"

"There is, my child, within that watch a little spring, which is extremely delicate, but which,

wound up very carefully, makes all the little wheels move in perfect order, so that we can measure time by hours, minutes, and even seconds. But if that little spring was once broken, the watch ceases to tick.

“Did you know that you had a little watch in your own bosom, which beats as evenly and as truly as this little watch you have in your hand, and that if it should cease to beat, you would cease to live? that your little eyes would close, your breath stop, and you would be cold and still? Can you tell me, my child, the name of this watch?”

“Oh! yes, it must be my own little heart. Why, mamma, yesterday, while I was laying my head on little Mamy’s bosom, I heard her heart beat just like this watch. I then took my head off, and tried to hear my own heart beat; but I could not hear it at all.”

“No, my dear, you could not hear your own heart beat. Yet it beats the same as your little sister’s, and will never cease beating while you live. But can you tell me who made your heart, and has kept it beating?”

"It was God!"

"Yes, my child, it was God; and since he gave you your life and breath, he has never ceased to watch over you with the most tender care. Although there are millions and millions of other human beings in existence, yet, night and day, he has kept your heart beating. If for one moment he had forgotten or neglected you, your heart would have ceased beating, and you would have been in the cold, cold, grave.

"Do you think of this, my child, when you are running around so joyous and happy? Do you ever stop to think of him who never for an instant has left you,—who, though you forget to thank him, and scarcely stop to think of him, has never ceased to love you, and watches over you with more tenderness than a careful mother can? Oh, my dear Charlie, it was but a few days since I heard you say, 'I am so weary that I cannot say my prayers to-night. What think you, my child, would become of you if God should say, 'Oh! I am so weary I cannot keep little Charlie's heart beating?' Now, my dear boy,

you should be very thankful that you have such a precious Father in heaven, who never slumbers nor sleeps, and who loves the lambs of his fold most tenderly. You have a Saviour, who came from his glorious home in heaven, and suffered and died for you, and who took little children in his arms, and blessing them, said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Now, my child, do you think you can forget to love such a Saviour and such a God? However weary you are, can you close your eyes in slumber, until you have thanked him for all his blessings, and asked him to continue them with you, and prepare you for heaven? But, Charlie, my boy, your heart must be changed in order to meet God."

"But, mamma, how can my little heart be so pure? Only yesterday, when little sister Mamy ran upon the bridge I was making, before it was finished, I was very angry, and pulled her off and struck her. In an instant I knew I had done wrong, for something whispered so to me in my heart."

"You did very wrong, my child, and the voice that whispered to you was your conscience. God

has very kindly placed it within your bosom as a monitor; and when conscience whispers to you, you should always heed its warning, and seek to know the will of God, what it is. Now, my child, which would you rather be; a man who is respected and beloved, or one who is despised and forsaken?"

"Oh! I wish to be a good man; but sometimes I do not do quite right, and how can I get to heaven if my heart must be pure?"

"The Bible tells us, 'there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' So you see, my boy, if we trusted to our own goodness, we could never reach heaven. But Jesus Christ has died for us. So that his blood can wash our sins away, and make our hearts, now dark with sin, pure as the drifting snow. All he asks in return is that we should love him."



XV

APOSTLE JOHN IN PATMOS.



HE hand of persecution is laid upon the holy John. He is banished to the isle of Patmos, condemned, as he tells us, "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." It was while there that that wonderful and sublime book of Revelation was written by him. In the midst of his solitude, on one particular Lord's day, his soul was greatly refreshed and comforted. Under the sweet influence of the Spirit, his prison became like a paradise to him. Suddenly, a voice addressed him, in tones distinct and clear, and turning around, he saw, to his unspeakable joy, his blessed Lord standing before him. There is he, on whose bosom he had leaned so lovingly, with whom

he had walked and talked amid the scenes of Judea, and whose sufferings on the cross he had witnessed ; but how changed in his appearance.

There he was, the man of sorrows, in the midst of his humiliation ; now he is glorified. He appeared to John clothed in a garment of light and glory, and girt about with a golden girdle. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet like brass when it burns and gleams in a furnace, and the majestic tones of his voice were like the sound of many waters. His countenance shone like the sun in its noon-day glory ; in his hand were seven stars, signifying the ministers of the seven churches, and out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword, no doubt, emblematic of the power of his word. At this sight John fell down like one dead, but Jesus laid his hand upon his head, saying, " Fear not, I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold I am alive forevermore."

He was then commanded to write in a book the things that would be revealed to him. The counsels of the Lord in regard to coming ages, and the

Wonderful designs of Providence in the future were all made known to him, in news thrilling and delightful. He was permitted to look upon the throne of God, and to hear the lofty swell of the song of praise from angels and saints. He gives us such a view of God, and of the future glorious home of the believer, as to excite our love and joy. This poor world seems but a dark passage-way, through which we are passing to our Father's house, and we long to get out into the light of an eternal day; the sight of heaven seems more attractive as we gaze upon their employments, and we long to join the blessed company that move around the eternal throne.

John was privileged with bright views of heaven when on earth, but how much clearer and brighter does he now behold eternal things. Compared with what he now knows, he was formerly seeing dimly through a glass. Let us seek to get ready for that state by being washed in the blood of Jesus, by having the seal of God on our foreheads, and by such a training of love in communion with Jesus

here, that it will be easy for us to join in the song of heaven, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

John found in his solitude that his Lord had not forgotten him, nor the churches from whom his bodily presence was now removed.

More than half a century had gone past since Jesus ascended on high, and he shows that his love to the Church is still the same. It is true that during that time he had appeared to the dying Stephen and the persecuting Saul; but now he breaks again the silence of eternity to deliver his last message to the Churches and to complete the canon of Scripture.

This renowned Isle of Patmos, where the Apostle was confined so long, is often visited by modern travelers. They describe it as rugged, desolate, and barren, and in every way unattractable. To this gloomy abode Roman officers conducted the beloved disciple, and left him alone with God and a good conscience, the best of company in trouble. There

is a rocky mountain which rises up from the sea; and about half way up it, is found a natural grotto formed in the rocks.

Tradition says that into this John often retired for prayer and meditation ; and that this was the place where he saw the Lord Jesus on that memorable Lord's day of which he speaks.

We may imagine that we see this venerable old man, then about ninety years of age, walking around his rocky prison. His countenance beams with light, and as he looks over the past, as old men delight to do, he has the most delightful memories to recall.

Unlike the Emperor of the French, when confined to his Isle of the sea, he had not to look back upon bloody battle-fields and desolate homes, and blazing cities, and long trains of widows and orphans, made such by his mad ambition. There are few things in history more sad, than that great general in his last moments, muttering out his commands to his armies, and in imagination fighting over again his bloody conflicts, when he was in the

grasp of the great conqueror Death. John had very different scenes to look back upon.

With what happy emotions would he look upon the time when the God-man came up to him and said, "Follow me." And with what delight he would call up the many discourses he had heard from the lips of Jesus, and the many mighty miracles he had seen wrought by his hands. That sight on the Mount of Transfiguration; the institution of the Supper, when he leaned upon the bosom of our Lord; the awful night in Gethsemane, with its prayers and sweat of blood, and the Cross with the divine sufferer upon it; the darkness and the earthquake; the cry "It is finished,"—all would be fondly dwelt upon in his solitary hours.

He would recall the joy he felt when the good news broke upon his ears, "The Lord is risen," and his early run to the sepulchre; the happy meeting when Jesus unexpectedly appeared in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you," and that wonderful walk up the slopes of Olivet, when he

breathed upon them his parting blessing, and was received up into heaven.

That little band of twelve that the Lord had selected on earth had one after another passed away from the scenes of their toils and their conflicts, leaving only the holy John; and he is now venerable with years, and worn down with laboring and suffering in his Master's cause. One of the number had made shipwreck of his soul, and rushed uncalled into eternity, the betrayer of his Lord, and with his hands red with the blood of self-murder.

The Lord was preparing his servant for the heavenly revelations of a most glorious character, that he was about to flash upon his soul. All at once he loses sight of his gloomy prison, and finds himself in a world that needs no light of sun, but is all illuminated by the glory of the God head, which beams forth with the splendor of eternal day.

Soon there passes before the Apostle a vast throng of holy and happy beings, such as he had never before seen. He intensely desired to know

who they were. It probably never entered his head that beings so pure, so exalted, and so unspeakably happy, could ever have known any thing of sin and suffering; but in this he was mistaken, for his informant says, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

They were once earthly beings. Unlike the holy angels they were not natives of that bright world. They belonged to this apostate world, and took an active part, at one time, in its revolt against God. The banner of practical rebellion was planted in their hearts, and there waved in open defiance of God. They were once tied down to a body of sin and death, as we are.

But see what grace has done for them! The blood of Jesus has taken away every sin and left them fit companions for angels, and such as God can smile upon well pleased. They appear there in the righteousness of Jesus, in which the eye of infinite purity cannot detect a flaw.

Angels appear in a mere creature righteousness,

but they in Creator righteousness, that of God in our own nature. What a change! The grovelling sinner on earth, lifted above the angels in heaven; the child of Satan made the child of God; the heir of wrath become the heir of heaven.

Well might the apostle say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

These glorified beings were once sufferers; sin and suffering are inseparably united. Could sin find an entrance into heaven, its song would be mingled with groans, and tears would wet the spotless robes of white. Our world is a groaning, weeping, suffering world, simply because it is steeped in sin. God loved the world of sinners, but hated their sins. To the sinners, he gave his best, his greatest gift,—his Son; on sin he utters his most awful, irrevocable curse. In that happy throng are some who once sat in darkness of mind, and wrote bitter, despairing things against themselves. Like the poet Cowper, they thought that God had forsaken them. When they opened the Bible, they could see only curses and flashes of lurid wrath. At

last, from gazing on Sinai, quaking with tempests and convulsions of vengeance, they turned their eyes to Calvary, and heard the sweet voice of love, saying, "It is finished." Then they stepped out of the prison-house of unbelief; the chains of sin fell off; the new song broke out from their hearts, and the heaven they now enjoy began in that hour. When justice opened the book of God's remembrance and read out the long, black catalogue of their sins, their great surety, Jesus, said, "I have paid the mighty price for all."

Thus even justice joined in the loud, joyful announcement, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

There are some who were greatly afflicted on earth. Like Baxter or Robert Hall, they suffered bodily torture for long years of agony. But one moment in glory made them forget it all. Others had trials of severe persecution. They pined in prisons and dark loathsome dens. Driven from home and friends, they hid in the wilderness, while the tempests of midnight roared around them, or

savage beasts put their lives in constant danger. From bloody scaffolds and torturing racks, and flaming fagots, they went to the welcome and embrace of Jesus. Like Stephen, they saw the heavens open to take them in before they were ready to enter, and the Lord standing with an almighty gush of tenderness in his heart and streaming from his eyes, with open arms to receive them to his bosom forever. No wonder they are so happy, and roll forth their songs in rapturous strains and deathless numbers.

In short, all that have ever lived upon earth, who were washed in the blood of the Lamb, are in that happy throng; prince and peasant, rich and poor, high and low, learned and ignorant, all without exception who have applied to the sin-cleansing blood, are at once welcomed to that holy place, and a crown, a harp, a throne, palms of victory and robes of purity become theirs. To such the gates of glory are thrown open. Such have a right there, — a blood-bought right. Reader, are you sure of heaven? Are you fit for it? If you are in Christ,

this is so; if not, Jesus says, "I never knew you,—
depart."

"Home of the conquerors ! how bright,
How glorious shine thy walls of light !
May I, through Christ a passage win,
And late or early, enter in.

"No clang of arms, no shouts are there,
Borne on the soft and balmy air ;
No snares are spread, no serpent's fold,
Upon the shining streets of gold.

"No foeman's form is there descried,
No whisper heard of hate or pride ;
To all the storms that *here* may swell,
The hosts of heaven have bid farewell.

"Home of the conquerors ! I press
Towards thy haunts of happiness,
In Jesus' name I fight, I win ;
Lift up the gates and let me in !"



XVI.

THE BLESSED DEAD.



WHEN we can get no further good from the lives of our Christian friends, we should try to get what good we can from their death.

While they were with us, they shone upon us with the sweet beauty and holy activity of true godliness ; and now that we have but their graves and the tender remembrances of their virtues, let us get from these such profit as may be obtained. For, if even the smallest trials of life contain for us some instruction, how much more the deep and terrible sorrows of death and the grave.

First, let us seek to imitate all that was Christ-like about them. It has been truly said, that a

man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. Your friend may have had profound scholarship, great splendor of talents, or bright flashes of genius; he may have had great amiability of temper, and a warmth of affection that made him the most true and loving of friends; but it is what he was towards God, that you will best like to think of, now that he is gone.

It is surely a loving feeling of our nature that leads us to forget the failings of our departed friends, and to remember their excellences; and it would be a great improvement if we would only at once set about imitating their goodness, and following them as far as they followed Jesus.

My dear young reader, you remember that praying mother, that godly father, that you but lately laid in the grave. They longed for your soul's salvation with intense solicitude, and it may be, spent their dying breath in prayers and counsels on your behalf.

You revere the memory of that dear mother whose tears rained down upon you as she knelt over your

cradle, and stormed heaven with her importunities that you might be a noble and useful Christian.

You cherish a profound affection for these lost ones. You often visit the spot where lies their dust. Then you plant flowers and water them with your tears; then you think of all they were to you in the days of your helplessness, and of the noble record they left you of unsullied character and untarnished reputation—an inheritance of which to be proud. But why, only, do you not love your mother's Saviour and adore your father's God? Take down that holy Bible this very night; pick out some sweet portion that mother loved to read so often, marking the place with her spectacles, and returning to it again as soon as she could; then kneel down and say, "God of my parents, save my sinful soul!" Then give your heart to Jesus by simple faith, and take the place in the church left vacant by these departed ones. Thus will you do more to honor their memory than could be done by the most costly monument ever erected.

We generally hold sacred the dying wishes of

our friends. In regard to the place of their burial, the disposal of their temporal affairs, and the carrying out of their favorite plans, we would shrink from the thought of disregarding their dying injunctions. Why not feel the same about their expressed wishes in reference to eternal things? Here is a man whose loving and gentle wife went down into the cold river with the songs of holy triumph, that so often die away into the loftier praises of heaven. Oh! how she prayed for him with her pale and quivering lips! How earnestly she employed the last fragments of her perishing strength to point him to Jesus! And when, just before the shining ones came to bear her away to her beautiful home in glory, she said, "Promise me that you will give your heart to the Lord, and that you will meet me in heaven;" and, while convulsed with grief, he imprinted a kiss on her cold lips, the required pledge was given, a flush of joy lighted up the face over which the dark shadow of death was gathering, and the loving heart ceased to throb.

Now, my reader, that promise, made under the

most solemn circumstances, is registered in heaven ; how have you redeemed it ? Are you now in holy union of soul with the loved one, and has her glorified spirit joined with the angels in rejoicing over your conversion ? If still at a distance from your Saviour, let this be the last hour of your estrangement. Lay down this book and go to Jesus just as you are. Do not wait till the next day or the next hour. That is the device of the devil. Jesus will never be more willing to save you, and you will never be more fit to be saved, than this very moment.

Now grasp the truth that Jesus did all for you that needed to be done, and that by trust in his merits you are a saved man. Thus will you honor him whom all heaven adores, and thus can you best show your regard for your sainted dead.

We should learn from the death of our pious friends, to value more those still left to us. Perhaps no one ever committed to the grave the remains of a friend, without a feeling of regret that the dear one was not loved and valued more while alive.

We feel that if we could only have them back again, how much more we should do to make them happy. All the bitter or hasty words spoken to them come up in our recollection like accusing spirits. Gladly would we blot out of the records of the past, everything that we have said or done to cause them trouble; but alas! it is impossible. They stand out foul and unnatural blots in the history of our lives, and have left deep scars on the conscience.

The young man or woman, amid the full gush of animal health and spirits, may deem it a small thing to neglect a pious mother's counsels, to address her in terms of harshness and insolence, and so to act as to wring her heart with anguish, and imbitter the closing years of her life, that ought to have been made as calm as the going down of a summer sun; but a time is coming when you would give all the world, were it yours, to recall those words and deeds. When death has stamped his seal upon that meek, calm face; when those bony hands that

wrought for your comfort, are crossed over the bosom that coldness and harshness can no more disturb; or when the green grass waves over the grave of her, who loved you as no other on earth ever can; ah! then will the memory of your undutiful conduct bite like a serpent and sting like an adder.

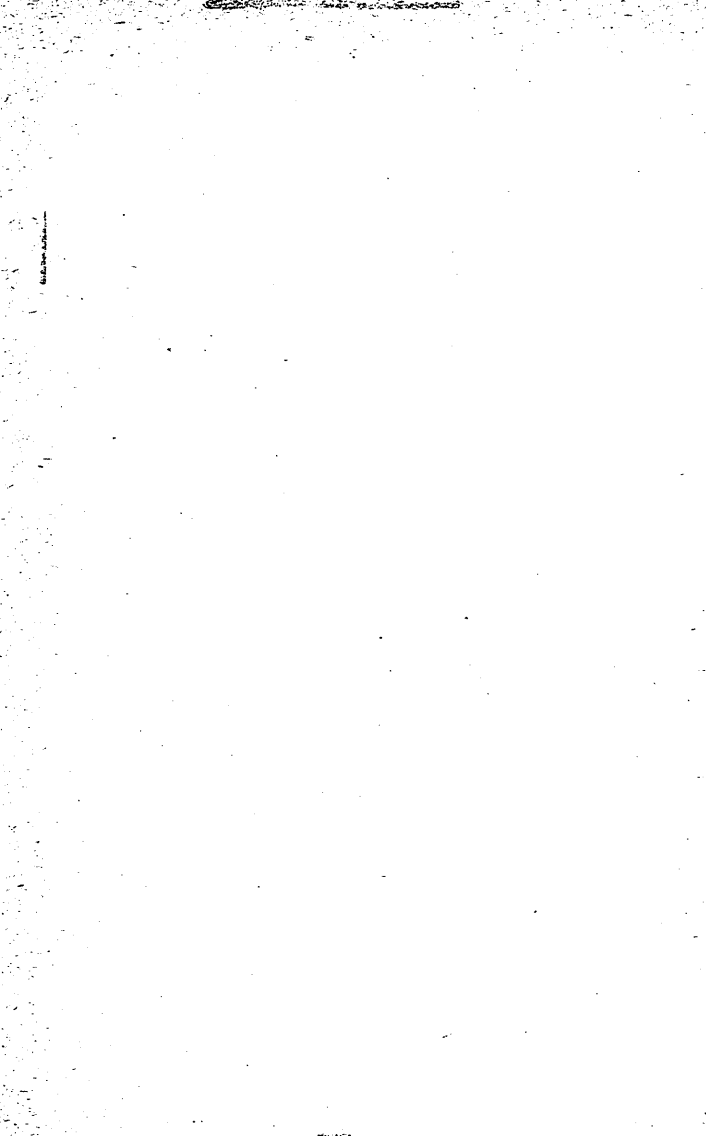
“Oh! that I had my father back only for one hour!” said a wicked youth, as he cast himself in mental agony upon his parent’s grave. “I feel as if I could pluck my tongue out of my head, for my last word to him was one of insolence and anger. I can never forgive myself, and feel as if the vengeance of my father’s God must forever pursue me for what I have done.” My young friends, listen now to the voice of paternal counsel before it is too late; and so treat your pious friends while you have them, that there shall be no remorse mingling with your sorrow when they are taken from you.

From the death of our friends let us learn to hate sin, the cause of death. Death is sin’s first-born.

We can judge what the parent is from the hideous and deformed offspring. All the groans, the tears, the pains, the dying strife, that so wrings our hearts, and makes of this beautiful world a vast sepulchre, is sin's work.

It is the only thing that God hates.







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